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Table of exchange rates for various countries including Albania, Andorra, Austria, etc.

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The scandal that never was

Sex, the IRA and dirty tricks

The Week, page 13

Art forms of the century: photography

Lie of the lens

The Week, page 18

Sport

Liam Botham turns his back on cricket

The Week, page 20

Germany and France agree compromise on pact hailed a 'victory for Europe' as Britain looks on

Major trails in euro's wake

Strategy for launch of single European currency gets an enthusiastic thumbs up after months of wrangling

John Palmer and Michael White in Dublin

THE Dublin summit last night struck a crucial compromise on the road to monetary union which paved the way for the launch of a single European currency on January 1, 1999...

As smaller EU states, led by the Irish presidency, brokered an agreement between France and Germany on the new currency 'stability and growth pact', European officials proudly revealed their winning design for the first euro banknotes.

The day's work clears the way for a major political drive in the New Year to convince wavering public opinion in Germany, France and other countries to back monetary union...

"This is a victory for Europe. It is a victory for the euro," enthused the commissioner for the single currency, Yves Thubaut de Sibaud...

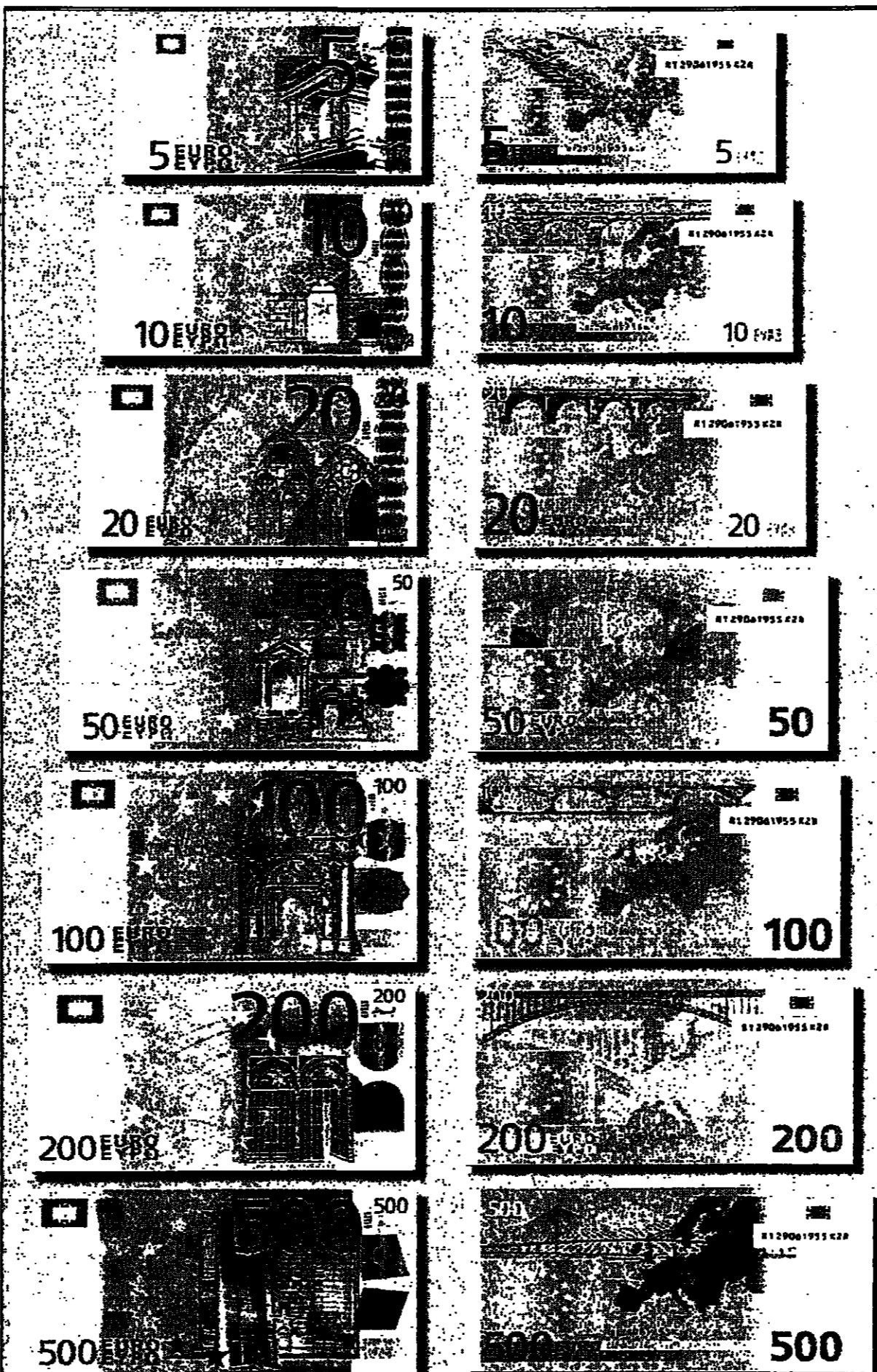
insisted that others follow their lead later.

Yesterday's stability accord was reached after 11 hours of tortuous and, at times, arcane bargaining. It came as the European Monetary Institute unveiled its choice of design for euro notes.

The final stages of the negotiation consisted of 30 minutes of wheeling and dealing between Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Chirac. They "finally agreed on the last precise figures and the detailed words used in the pact with a smile and a handshake", a watching Swedish diplomat said later.

The agreement was quickly made public by a visibly relieved Irish finance minister, Ruairi Quinn. There had been fears a failure to agree the stability pact might have triggered doubts about the political will to keep to the 1999 timetable and the risk of currency turbulence on international financial markets.

"We are now able to say to the citizens of Europe and to the markets that we have agreed the legal basis (of the euro), the ERM (exchange rate mechanism) mark 2, and the terms and conditions of the stability and growth pact," Mr Quinn declared.



The euro notes unveiled yesterday by EU officials in Dublin. A decision on coinage will be taken in June

Deyan Sudjic, architecture correspondent, assesses the artistic merits, or otherwise, of the euro banknotes with their pan-national identities

BY BANK of England standards, with its fixation for depicting cricket matches and decrepit whiskery Victorian men on its bank notes, the euro does at least look as if it belongs in this century.

But set beside the beautiful notes issued by the Dutch and the Swiss, the seven euro banknotes have the look of something makeshift, prepared in a hurry by an ex-people's republic struggling to rid its currency of the iconography of Stalinism and ultimately failing to catch up with the modern world.

Designing a note is a curious mix of conjuring trick and graphic skill. The designer has to transform a worthless scrap of paper into something apparently of value reflecting a specific national, or in this case pan-national, identity.

Using the imagery of architecture and engineering to do it is all very well as an idea, but the execution is dismal. Instead of real places we get identikit romanesque, fictitious baroque and film studio modern. They have all the grace of a Lefraset catalogue.

Queen and Tyson set for classic clash with £1 m purse



In the blue corner... the pigeon fancying monarch

Nick Varley on a race in South Africa on which some big reputations depend

HE IS one of the most fearsome men on earth, reared on boxing in the Bronx. She grew up in splendour, but has had a miserable time of late; all that family squabbling and tax demands.

but pride is at stake, and both enjoy reputations as keen competitors. They will clash early next year. More accurately, and prosaically, the pair's pigeons are to compete in one of the most valuable races of its sort.

Both the Queen and the recently deposed champion are keen fanciers, and both have entered birds in the Million Dollar Classic to be staged in Sun City, South Africa, in February.

South Africa. Viewers will be able to see if the Queen's or Tyson's birds, or any of the other 1,800 shipped in from Saudi Arabia, the US, China and Europe, gain the upper hand.



In the red corner... deposed king Tyson, who 'did bird'

Inside Millions of people in Britain face higher home loan bills as two of the country's biggest lenders raised interest rates.

World News Kofi Annan of Ghana is to be the new United Nations secretary-general after France abruptly dropped his opposition to him.

Finance Citicorp, US bank, has abandoned plans to pay \$25 billion to take over Amex in what would have been the largest buy-out in banking history.

Sport Liam Botham, son of all-rounder father, is turning his back on cricket, opting to play rugby union for West Hartlepool.

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Advertisement for The Guardian International Umbrella, featuring an image of a blue and white golfing umbrella and contact information for ordering.

Country braced for Saddam's revenge after gun attack wounds his favourite son

Fear stalks Iraqi streets

David Hirst in Beirut

THOUSANDS of people gathered yesterday in the Baghdad street where Saddam Hussein's elder son survived an assassination attempt in a staged celebration of Uday Hussein's remarkable escape from gunmen who attacked his car.

But there were suspicions that Uday's condition could be more serious than the regime has admitted, and behind the facade of celebration — marked by the slaughter of sheep — Iraqis were braced for sweeping retaliation.

Officials in Jordan said the border with Iraq closed for several hours after Thursday evening's attack, apparently to prevent those responsible from fleeing the country. Iraqi officials searched cars and passengers crossing the border yesterday after it had reopened.

There have been no claims of responsibility for the daring assassination attempt, and exiled opponents of the Iraqi



Uday - a life of infamy

MORE than claims to fame, Uday Hussein has claimed infamy as the wild-child eldest son of Saddam Hussein.

Character: Often drunk, and sadistically violent.

Crimes: Last year shot an uncle, Wathban Ibrahim, whose leg was amputated in consequence. Blinded to death his father's faithful food taster in 1988.

Target of hatred: Object of at least two other assassination attempts since the 1991 Gulf war.

Key enemy: Despised by younger brother, Qusay, who presides over father's security agencies. "But I think we can rule him out [in the assassination bid]", said an opposition figure. "Cyanide in Uday's whisky would be more his style."

regime are unsure whether it was carried out by enemies within the government itself, or outside it.

But they say that, either way, it is a brutal shock to the system — proof that in spite of his success in securing a partial resumption of oil exports, President Saddam is vulnerable to the sudden, unexpected blow that one day must bring his downfall.

According to yesterday morning's Baghdad newspapers, Uday — officially

described as only "lightly wounded" — was making a speedy recovery in hospital. Unusually, Youth Radio and Television — owned by Uday himself — had broken the news of the attack before it reached the outside world. But yesterday it did not mention the subject. This has fuelled speculation that Uday's wounds are more serious than he is admitting.

As details of the incident emerged, one report from Baghdad quoted witnesses

saying two gunmen were involved.

Accounts from the exiled opposition were more dramatic, as saying that four or five men armed with machine guns and grenades, took part in the attack in the smart residential suburb of Mansura.

Uday, aged 32, was reportedly seen with his head covered in blood, although it was not clear, as his guards rushed him to hospital, whether this was caused by

bullets or the smashed windscreen. The assailants escaped.

If these accounts are true, the planning involved must be disturbing to the regime — although Uday has always presented an easy target. Notoriously reckless, especially when drunk, he would often career unescorted around Baghdad in an expensive car.

His personal conduct has been highly provocative to a people whose rulers live in luxury while they sink into deeper misery. One theory, therefore, is that the assassination bid was just an isolated expression of popular despair. That would be the least worrying for the regime.

It would be more concerning if it was carried out by an organised group with the intention of overthrowing the regime. One opposition source claimed that among those already arrested were 200 members of an elite security apparatus.

The regime would be more alarmed if it turned to be another episode in the hidden feud which rack Saddam's clan.

Homeowners face dearer mortgages as rates rise

Experts predict more interest rate rises before the election

Richard Miles

MILLIONS of homeowners face higher mortgage bills in the New Year after two of the biggest lenders yesterday announced a hike in their standard interest rates.

Signalling dearer mortgages for all, Halifax, Britain's largest lender with 2.5 million borrowers, upped its variable rate to 7.25 per cent. The rise comes into force immediately for new borrowers, but takes effect on January 1 for existing customers.

Other lenders quickly followed suit, with Nationwide adding a quarter point to its

loan rate, which rises to 6.99 per cent. A third lender, Britannia, also increased its interest charge to 7.25 per cent.

Although the cost of borrowing is still far below its peak when rates briefly hit 15.4 per cent in March 1990, economists believe they will rise again next year, possibly before the General Election.

An incoming Labour government may well be forced to bump up interest rates to contain inflation. Climbing house prices will bring added pressure to lift rates.

Yesterday's increase puts between an extra 27 and 210 on the monthly bill for a £50,000 mortgage, the average size of a new loan. For Halifax

customers it is the first rise since February 1995, but it is the second within a month for Nationwide borrowers.

Mike Blackburn, Halifax's chief executive, said the move followed October's rise in bank base rates. He said: "The recovery in the housing market continues and over the last two years borrowers have benefited from low interest rates and low mortgage payments."

Rob Thomas, of the investment bank UBS, said rates will have to rise again early next year "if not before the election, at least shortly afterwards — as the economy heats up and inflationary pressures emerge."

Mr Thomas said climbing house prices will play a significant part "if not before the election, at least shortly afterwards" — as the economy heats up and inflationary pressures emerge.

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Pensioner recovers bungalow 'stolen' by elusive fraudster

Clare Dyer
Legal Correspondent

APENSIONER whose bungalow was stolen four years ago in an ingenious fraud has won it back despite warnings from legal experts that he had little chance.

Frank Higgins, aged 76, whose plight was first revealed by the Guardian, was yesterday celebrating "a marvellous gift for Christmas, which came out of the blue".

The former Royal Marine fitness instructor had the bungalow built in 1961 on land in South Wonston, Hampshire, bought for £500. He lived there until five years ago when he fell ill while visiting Scotland, had an operation for cancer of the colon and moved into the Burntisland, Fife, home of his fiancée, Ella Millar, now aged 70, to recuperate.

He left the bungalow empty but furnished to await his return, but he developed fur-

ther health problems. Four years ago a man calling himself Frank Higgins swore a statutory declaration before a solicitor that he was the true owner but had lost the deeds. The Land Registry registered the land and issued a certificate in the name of Frank Higgins. The fraudster, who despite extensive police investigations has never been found, sold the property on to an innocent purchaser, whose name, D. N. Wetton, replaced Mr Higgins's on the register.

Land law experts believed the real Mr Higgins had fallen through a loophole in the system under which a new buyer unaware of a previous fraud is entitled to remain on the register as owner.

But the Land Registry, which accepts that it should have asked for proof that the fraudster was Frank Higgins, offered to refund the money Mr Wetton paid for the property from his compensation scheme if he agreed to surrender it to Mr Higgins. The deal,

which includes payment of Mr Higgins's and Mr Wetton's legal fees, is expected to cost the Land Registry £100,000.

Mr Higgins, a second world war veteran who lives on the state pension plus an £800-a-year private pension, was refused legal aid because of £9,000 savings. When he heard he was getting his bungalow back, he felt "great, absolutely marvellous".

"I felt tremendously reassured when I was told to disclaim any responsibility."

Blair vote rigger named

Andrew Gull
Media Correspondent

THE woman at the centre of Labour's attempts to rig the BBC's Personality of the Year award was last night revealed as a veteran Ministry of Agriculture civil servant specialising in hedge-rows and wildlife habitats.

Julie Hurry, who signed a letter to the Labour Party workers urging them to fax their support for Tony Blair in the Radio 4 Today programme poll, has worked at the ministry for about 20 years.

As Labour launched an internal inquiry, a succession of spin doctors and party leaders urged Ms Hurry to disclaim any responsibility.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food said Ms Hurry, a middle-ranking policymaker on rural issues, had been on unpaid leave of absence since last month.

Ms Hurry signed the letter from Labour's audience participation unit, which is based at the party's media centre at Millbank and part of the team under campaign manager Peter Mandelson.

Despite the attempt at voter-rigging, Mr Blair failed to make the shortlist — although John Major is understood to be a contender.

Ms Hurry's involvement led for calls from Conservative MPs for an inquiry into the neutrality of the civil service.

A MAFF spokesman said it was trying to contact Ms

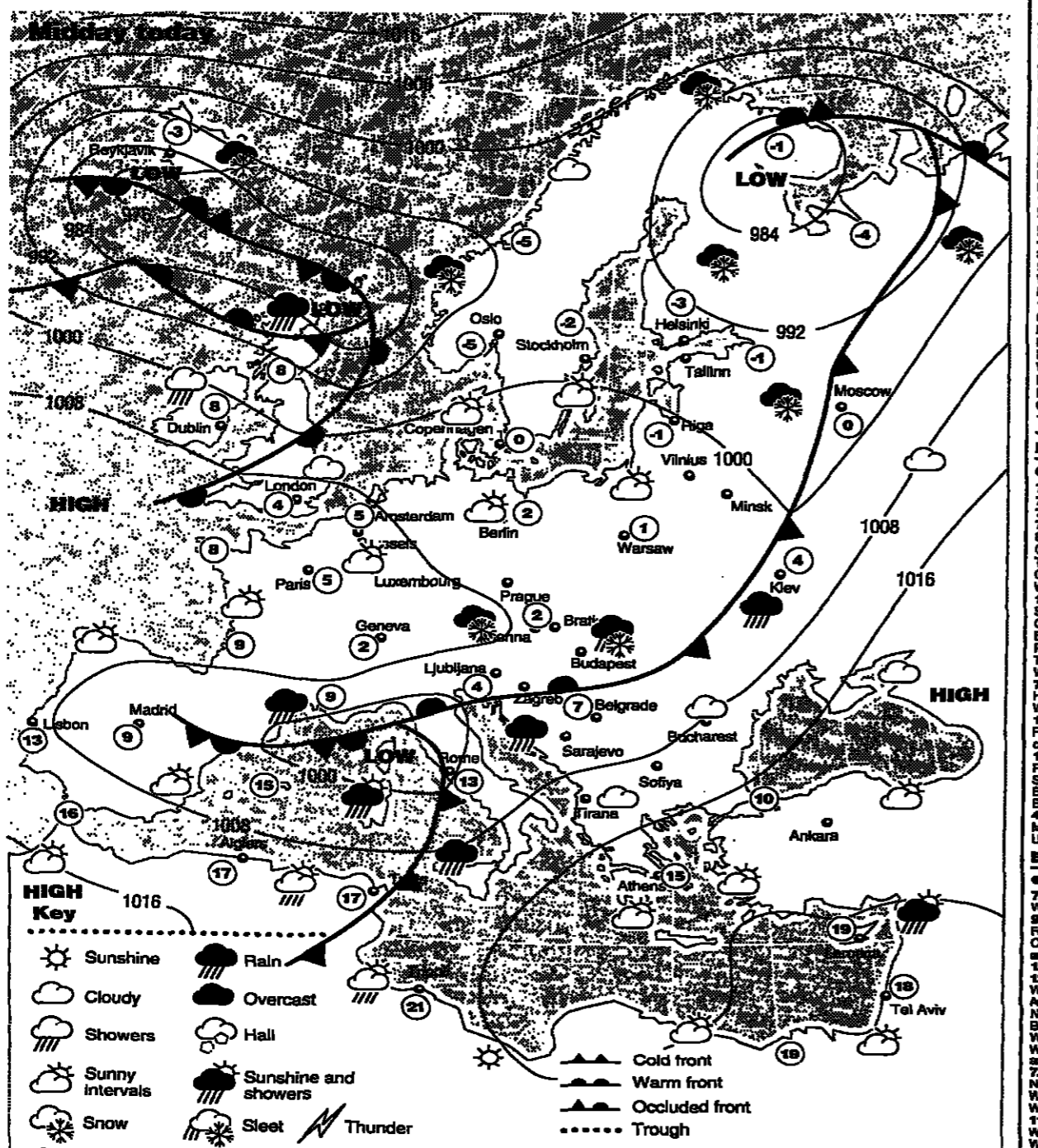
Hurry, a civil servant in the countryside policy unit.

Embarrassed Labour officials insisted Ms Hurry, who is a party member but not a Civil Service rules. She has been granted a career break by MAFF because of her partner's disability.

A spokesman said: "Normal Civil Service rules apply during her leave of absence and those rules do not allow her to do backroom work for a political party. She is not allowed to campaign publicly or speak for a political party and she has not done so in any way."

Brian Wilson, who runs Labour's rebuttals unit, admitted it had been a "tacky" venture. "It was a silly thing and there's no attempt to defend it," he told Today.

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
London	10	W	Cloudy
Paris	11	W	Cloudy
Berlin	10	W	Cloudy
Moscow	10	W	Cloudy
Stockholm	10	W	Cloudy
Amsterdam	10	W	Cloudy
Brussels	10	W	Cloudy
Vienna	10	W	Cloudy
Madrid	10	W	Cloudy
Rome	10	W	Cloudy
Warsaw	10	W	Cloudy
Prague	10	W	Cloudy
Sofia	10	W	Cloudy
Bucharest	10	W	Cloudy
Sarajevo	10	W	Cloudy
Belgrade	10	W	Cloudy
Skopje	10	W	Cloudy
Thessalonika	10	W	Cloudy
Atenas	10	W	Cloudy
Jerusalem	10	W	Cloudy
Tel Aviv	10	W	Cloudy

Around the world

City	Temp	Wind	Weather
London	10	W	Cloudy
Paris	11	W	Cloudy
Berlin	10	W	Cloudy
Moscow	10	W	Cloudy
Stockholm	10	W	Cloudy
Amsterdam	10	W	Cloudy
Brussels	10	W	Cloudy
Vienna	10	W	Cloudy
Madrid	10	W	Cloudy
Rome	10	W	Cloudy
Warsaw	10	W	Cloudy
Prague	10	W	Cloudy
Sofia	10	W	Cloudy
Bucharest	10	W	Cloudy
Sarajevo	10	W	Cloudy
Belgrade	10	W	Cloudy
Skopje	10	W	Cloudy
Thessalonika	10	W	Cloudy
Atenas	10	W	Cloudy
Jerusalem	10	W	Cloudy
Tel Aviv	10	W	Cloudy

European weather outlook

Summary: After a fine and frosty start, outbreaks of sleet and snow will drift from the west across southern Norway and Denmark, eventually reaching southern Sweden towards evening. The snow will be heavy in places but should turn to rain in Denmark and on the Norwegian west coast. The rest of Scandinavia will have a cold day with one or two snow showers. Max temp ranging from 3C in western Denmark to minus 8C in the north.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland: Early fog and mist may persist all day in a few spots, but in most places it will brighten up with some sunny periods. Switzerland, however, will have some outbreaks of rain and mountain-snow, and this may extend across parts of Austria. Max temp to 5C.

France: Southern France will be mostly dull and wet, especially at first. Elsewhere sunny fog and frost will be common with some sunny spells. Max temp 3-10C from north to south.

Spain: A good deal of dry and bright sun will be seen in the north and south. Max temp 8-16C from north to south.

Outbreaks of rain will soon reach the north and west and extend to all parts this afternoon; the rain will be heavy at times with a risk of thunder in the south. Max temp 8-14C from north to south.

Britain: A ridge of high pressure should ensure a fine, bright weekend with good spells of sunshine, especially on the islands. Max temp 13-16C.

Television and radio - Saturday

BBC 1
8.00am The Park Perfect Show, 8.25 News, 8.50am The Park Perfect Show, 9.00 The Park Perfect Show, 9.15 The Park Perfect Show, 9.30 The Park Perfect Show, 9.45 The Park Perfect Show, 10.00 The Park Perfect Show, 10.15 The Park Perfect Show, 10.30 The Park Perfect Show, 10.45 The Park Perfect Show, 11.00 The Park Perfect Show, 11.15 The Park Perfect Show, 11.30 The Park Perfect Show, 11.45 The Park Perfect Show, 12.00 The Park Perfect Show, 12.15 The Park Perfect Show, 12.30 The Park Perfect Show, 12.45 The Park Perfect Show, 1.00 The Park Perfect Show, 1.15 The Park Perfect Show, 1.30 The Park Perfect Show, 1.45 The Park Perfect Show, 2.00 The Park Perfect Show, 2.15 The Park Perfect Show, 2.30 The Park Perfect Show, 2.45 The Park Perfect Show, 3.00 The Park Perfect Show, 3.15 The Park Perfect Show, 3.30 The Park Perfect Show, 3.45 The Park Perfect Show, 4.00 The Park Perfect Show, 4.15 The Park Perfect Show, 4.30 The Park Perfect Show, 4.45 The Park Perfect Show, 5.00 The Park Perfect 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Distressing poster seeks to outfox the trade as real fur returns to acceptability after five years in the wilderness

Animal campaigners fight furtive comeback

Clare Longrigg

FIVE years ago, when you took off your mink coat after shopping in the West End of London, you would probably find a gob of phlegm or a sticker on the back saying "Ugh! Your disgusting fur coat".

By the end of the 1980s, campaigners had cleared the streets of real fur and Harrods had closed its fur department due to lack of demand.

But after the first wave of environmentally aware campaigning subsided, designers started sneaking bits of fur trim on collars and cuffs. Dolce & Gabbana, the Italian design duo, have warmed their fans' necks, wrists and hearts with mink trim on chiffon coats and handbags.

Tomasz Starszewski, the London socialite who dresses minor royals, has had models wearing fur cuffs and collars for the last few seasons.

Madonna, once a vociferous member of the anti-fur campaign, has swathed herself in furs to get into the skin of her alter ego, Eva Peron.

After five years in the fashion wilderness, fur is back as an acceptable accessory. The Fur Education Council, a London-based organisation which speaks for the fur trade, claims sales are up 30 per cent since last year. Herbert Johnson, the hatters in Old Bond Street, London, has seen sales of mink, sable and fox hats increase by 10-15 per cent year on year for the last five years.

"A lot of people were not wearing their fur coats because they were scared to walk out in furs in London," said Richard Jaggs-Fowler, general manager of Herbert Johnson. "Now they are becoming braver."

A Dolce & Gabbana spokeswoman said: "We started making fake and real fur stoles and collars and cuffs, but there has been a much greater demand for the real thing."

But these concessions to luxury at the expense of ethics have not gone unnoticed. This weekend, a disgusting billboard advertisement will be distressing millions of Britons. The poster, by campaign group Respect for Animals, shows a bloody, skinned fox's head on top of a fox fur coat, with the slogan: "Do you have the face to wear fur?"

The group began life in 1985 as the anti-fur group Lynx. Spokesman Mark Glover said: "We saw the way fur was being reported in the media, and we could see it was creeping back into respectability. Fashion pictures were beginning to portray fur in a way that doesn't show the ugly brutality behind the glamorous veneer."

In the 1980s, it was hip to be against almost everything. Designer Katharine Hamnett made clothes bearing anti-nuclear slogans in letters a foot high. Lynx sold T-shirts bearing jungle designs with the catchline: "The roar of disappearing". Top designers such as Yoji Yamamoto came out with huge fake fur coats in pink and lime green. Fur was not just something you wore, it was a statement.

American designer Calvin Klein promised to stop using fur after Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) picketed his offices and forced him to watch a video of animals caught in traps.

A Peta spokesman, Andrew

The problem



Butler, said that at this time of year, the fur industry always claims attitudes have changed. "Fur sales plummeted in the late 1980s, and they've been going down since. The only designers using fur are the ones who never stopped."

Peta began its "I'd rather go naked than wear fur" campaign in the mid-1980s, aiming at the fashion-conscious. It struck a blow for baby seals with a poster featuring four naked supermodels.

But the trouble with being hip is that everything that's in, sooner or later, goes out.

Audiences stirred by the anti-fur message of Disney's Delamations will be seduced by the striped and spotted

creations worn by Cruella De Vil, played by Glenn Close. There is some mid-1990s confusion in the profusion of Delamation-spotted jackets and accessories in the shops.

Next month's edition of the glossy Tatler magazine features four socialites in the buff, a publicity stunt for Peta. One of them, Tamara Beckwith, admits she does not lie awake worrying about the brutal death of furry animals, while Tara Newley, Joan Collins's daughter, temporarily forgets which charity she is promoting. "I've always fantasised about being a terrorist for Greenpeace."

Tatler carries a disclaimer to distance these radical views from the editorial

standpoint, which welcomes fur advertisers. Editor Jane Procter said: "I don't think there's anything wrong with fur. I can't see the difference between wearing sheepskin and fur, as long as it's not an endangered species."

She was surprised to see fur in the latest winter collections, as the UK fashion industry lifted its voluntary ban. "We thought it was fake. It was only when we looked closely that we realised it was real."

Tatler, resolutely unfashionable as ever, is picking up on the fashion for wearing your principles on your sleeve, several years after everyone else has used their famous anti-Furbing T-shirts to clean windows.

The protest



Left: Kate Moss wearing Fendi Autumn/Winter 1993, a real fur coat and signature print jeans

Above: The Tatler picture of Peta supporters, from left, model Tamzin Greenhill, actresses Tamara Beckwith and Sheba Ronay — granddaughter of gourmet Egon and daughter of designer Edina, and broadcaster and writer Tara Newley — daughter of actress Joan Collins

Right: The Respect for Animals poster

PHOTOGRAPH ABOVE: © JOHN SWANWELL/TATLER, CONDE NAST

The prey



Catwalkers steal the march on fakes

Susannah Frankel, Fashion Editor, feels what it's like to don someone else's coat

NOTHING is quite like the feeling of wearing fur. The effect is rather like being wrapped in feathers — protected from the elements, warm, safe and secure, if only in the knowledge that you are one of the privileged few who can actually afford it, and revel in the status that goes with it.

At least that's presumably the reasoning behind the re-emergence of the fur-wearing fraternity.

It is true that there does appear to be more fur on the catwalk than there has been for years. People are spending more money on clothes than they have done since the 1980s. The kinds of designer labels that are back with a fervency that hasn't been seen since the first half of that most decadent of decades.

That said, for the vast majority of us, the idea of wearing animal fur seems inappropriate, vulgar even. We might have more money to spend on our physical appearance than we used to,



Madonna as Evita, swathed in a symbol of the very rich

but while luxury may no longer be a dirty word, ostentatious certainly is. Our climate no longer demands that animals be killed for our comfort.

And for all the column inches devoted to real fur and its comeback, there are as many, if not more, that claim that more efficient heating systems means layering clothes is the most practical way to dress.

Real fur first became a fashion commodity in the 18th century, reaching its peak of popularity around the turn of the century, when fur capes, muffs,

Fur facts

□ Up to 100 squirrels or chinchillas, 80 minks or 50 foxes are used to make a full-length coat, says Peta. They are starved, gassed or electrocuted.

□ There are nine fur farms in Britain — down from 60 10 years ago.

□ UK sales have gone from £80m in 1984, £11m in 1989, £18m in 1993 to £22m in 1994, says the Fur Trade Association. The Fur Education Council says sales were up 30 per cent last year.

stoles and trimmings on coats and evening gowns were the thing for wealthy merchants and aristocrats to be seen in. Sealskin was the most sought after. In the 1920s and '30s, fur was equally *de rigueur* — how else could young damsels in the slightest fringed, beaded creations protect themselves from the cold?

It wasn't until the '60s that it dawned on people that fur was not only ethically unsound but that the look of it should be made available to more than just the very wealthy. And so the fur fur, a mixture of

various acrylic fibres, was born. Relatively inexpensive, it also had the advantage of being easily dyed in bold colours. It is a look that has lasted, and fake fur coats are more in demand than ever.

It's hardly surprising considering that the average price of a fake fur coat at Harrods is around £350 compared with £3,249 for a blue fox fur stole.

"We closed our real fur department in 1990," says Andrew Wiles, director of press and public relations at Harrods. "There simply wasn't the demand, and we needed the space for fashion. We do sell coats with fur linings and trimming, which is a far more discreet look."

Fake fur, however, are flying out of the store. "We've just re-ordered. The best-selling versions are short and black, a far cry from the plethora of white fur-trimmed handbags or impossibly opulent, russet-coloured collars seen on the runways in October."

The fact that much of what appears on the catwalk will never go into production is nothing new. As an aspirational show-piece then, real fur might be making some kind of a comeback. Whether the British public will actually ever be prepared to wear it is another matter.



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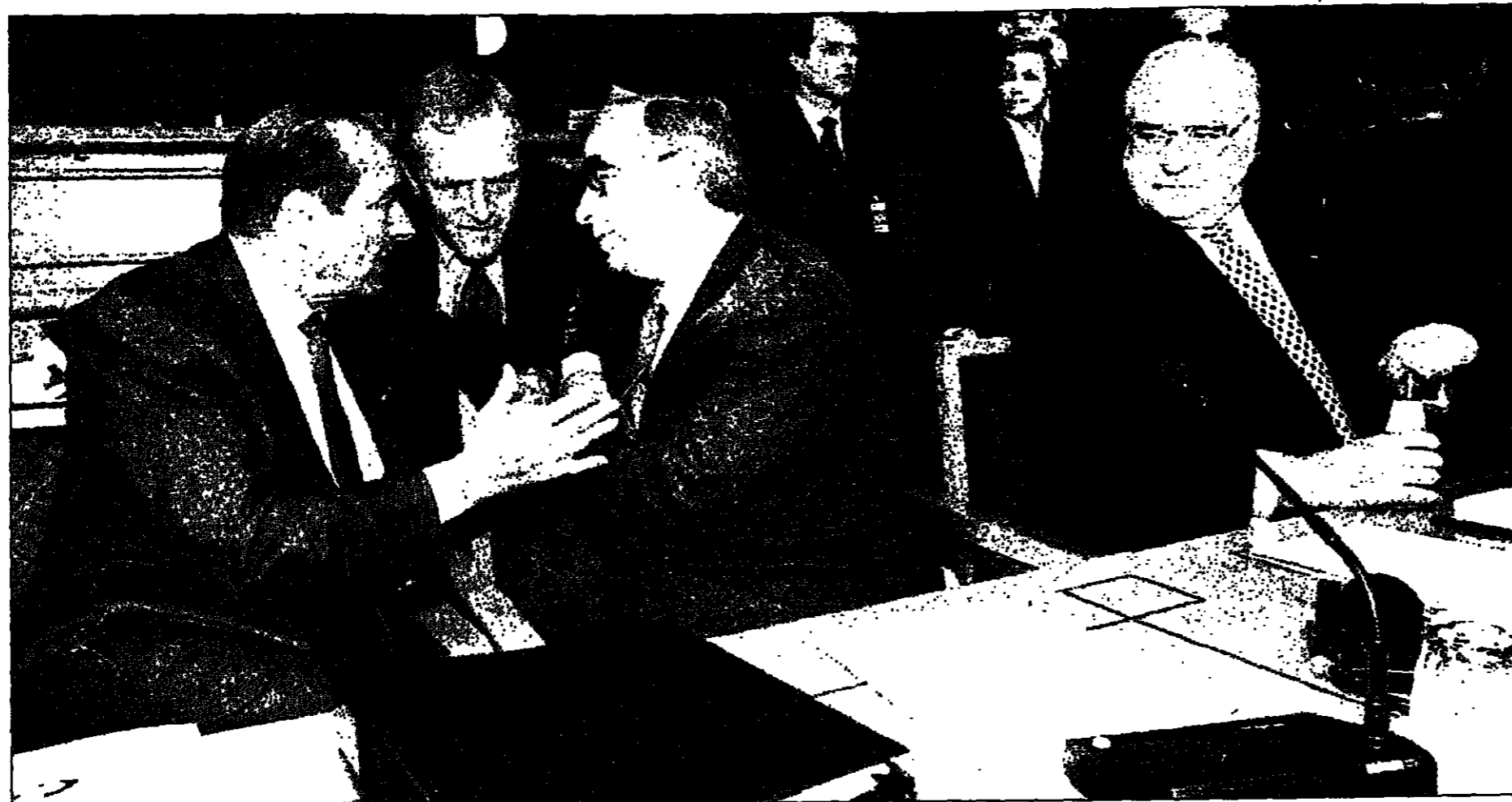
At our distillery in the Tennessee hills, we burn ricks of hard maple until they become charcoal. Then we trickle our whiskey, drop by drop, through that charcoal to mellow its flavor. Some folks call Jack Daniel's a "bourbon," but the U. S. Government says our charcoal mellowing makes us a "Tennessee Whiskey." If you're looking for a difference, we believe one sip will tell you all you need to know.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Premier lectures fellow leaders on flexible labour markets as differences over immigration controls and borders are kicked into touch

Major boasts UK is 'grit in EU oyster'



Chancellor Kohl looks on as President Chirac chats to Joachim Bitterlich (second left), a German foreign policy adviser, and Theo Waigel, the German finance minister. John Major talked of a raft of disagreements



Unity on the fight against drugs, but some crucial snags remain

Michael White in Dublin

A SHOW of European unity over the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime was achieved by the Dublin summiters yesterday, but fundamental differences over the control of immigration, asylum and national borders were again kicked into touch. After a session spent discussing the Irish draft text of EU treaty revisions — to be decided in Amsterdam next June — John Major signalled a raft of disagreements on which he would not budge, though he stressed they were only on relatively few issues. "The United Kingdom is sometimes the grit in the European oyster. It may not look very pretty from the outside, but it is pretty effective inside."

Earlier gave his colleagues what amounted to a lecture on flexible labour markets — "a monologue, not a dialogue" one called it — insisted that the key to future harmony was a flexible approach which allowed some states to move closer together without others either preventing them or being forced to follow. "The wrong sort of flexibility would blow Europe wide apart."

their offer of expertise — equipment, border control and training for customs officers — on Central Asia which is beginning to export narcotics into the EU.

They told fellow-leaders in a letter circulated in Dublin: "All of us are affected by the continuous supply of illicit opiates and heroin from Central Asia. The limited counter-narcotics capabilities in the zone allow traffickers to explore attractive new routes."

Cooperation at inter-governmental level, rather than through EU institutions, is seen by Whitehall as the best approach. Mr Major is telling his EU colleagues that, after a slow start which reflects the cautious culture of police and justice officials, the 15 have begun to achieve more in this field than they yet realise.

New measures to combat sophisticated cross-border crime confirmed at Dublin included stronger cooperation by police and customs; renewed targeting of the Balkan drugs routes into the European heartland, usually bringing in drugs from the South Asian "Golden Triangle" via Turkey; and stronger measures to detect and punish illicit cultivation within Europe's borders.

A review of national laws that may impede effective action against slavery and the sexual exploitation of chil-

dren was also endorsed. But the drive by some member states to use the current inter-governmental conference — reviewing the machinery of European institutions — for expanding the EU's supra-national role in border control and immigration remains subject to further negotiation before the conference ends at the Amsterdam summit.

The incoming Dutch EU presidency is keen to incorporate the Schengen Agreement — abolishing border controls — formally into the EU treaty. Mr Major has made plain that London will resist that, as it will efforts to harmonise asylum and immigration policies.

It emerged yesterday that EU interior ministers agreed at a secret conference in Paris to study harmonising anti-terrorism laws and speeding up extradition procedures, according to a French terrorism expert.

Roland Jacquard, head of the International Observatory of Terrorism, told Reuters that France's Jean-Louis Debré hosted a meeting on October 22. "Justice and police representatives from the United States were also present. The ministers set up a working group on harmonising anti-terrorism laws and on speeding up extradition procedures. The plan is for such conferences to take place every three months."

Power to impose deficit penalties rests with council of ministers

John Palmer

THE single currency stability pact agreed in Dublin yesterday will hand far-reaching powers to the European Union council of ministers to determine the fate of countries that take part in the single currency.

If a country taking part in economic and monetary union breaks the terms of the single currency "growth and stability pact", the council could impose huge financial penalties. Much of the 11th hour negotiations before the agreement focused on the circumstances that might justify a country's exceeding the tough budget disciplines set out in the Maastricht treaty.

But at the heart of the issue was a German attempt to limit the powers of ministers to waive or dilute the sanctions in the stability pact.

Although all countries which join the monetary union will be expected eventually — to run balanced budgets, they will be allowed to run deficits of up to 3 per cent of GDP in any year. They will be permitted to exceed these limits only if they can show that they are victims of "temporary and exceptional circumstances."

Natural disasters, acts of God and other unforeseeable developments could justify relaxation of EMU budget limits at least temporarily. But the difficult question was just how severe a normal economic crisis would have to be before a country with an "excessive deficit" was accorded a similar indulgence.

The answer agreed in Dublin yesterday was that a country would have to show that it suffered an annual fall of real GDP of 2 per cent or more. In recent decades there

have been only a dozen or so examples of countries hit by such a severe drop in output.

However, the stability pact goes on to say that waiving of the budget deficit limits might be considered in a less serious economic recession, but a country pleading for special treatment will still have to show that its circumstances are "nevertheless exceptional in the light of further supporting evidence, in particular on the abruptness of the downturn or the accumulated loss of output relative to past trends."

In a binding political declaration, EU governments have agreed that this will normally only require an annual fall in GDP of at least 0.75 per cent. In this event the European Commission will make a report to the council of ministers on whether there is a case for relaxing the rules. The council will then make a decision on a qualified majority vote.

The tortuous compromise is designed to alleviate fears, particularly in Germany, that the single currency might be too soft, and to prove that the EU will be tough on countries running up huge deficits. By carefully ensuring that the final word on sanctions remains a matter for political decision, the pact can be presented as a defeat for the idea of automatic sanctions.

None of the provisions of

the stability pact will apply to countries which do not join the single currency. But the strict financial targets set for acceptable budget deficits are bound to influence the attitude of the international financial markets towards non-EMU countries judged to be spendthrift.

Although the German government originally argued for open fines linked to the amount above 3 per cent of any budget deficit, the agreement is for a maximum penalty of 0.5 per cent of a country's GDP.

"The terms of this pact might seem tough," an EU official said last night. "But countries which stay outside the single currency may be hit far harder by the massive interest rate increases which can result from the displacement of the financial markets."

Ironically, the arguments about the single currency's precise budget deficit limits may be overtaken by an EU-wide review of economic statistics, which is due to report in two years.

Because of the growing importance of the service sector, particularly in information technology, all EU countries may find that their actual GDP levels are higher than the current figures — in which case the relative importance of their budget deficits will decrease as a percentage of GDP.

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'Soulless' euro note finds friends among future users

David Sharrock on a Dublin cash course

If the voices of the most enthusiastically European nation in the Union are to be believed, then the dream of a single currency finally founded in Dublin yesterday.

Within moments of the launch of the new euro — seven gaudy notes in denominations from five to five hundred — the plain people of Ireland were denouncing them in the earthy language of the Citizen, the anti-hero of James Joyce's Ulysses.

"I wouldn't wipe my arse with one," was the unequivocal response of a white-haired gentleman for whom Dublin's day at the centre of the European dream was going on far too long. "I mean we'll be spending these in 2001? Well I'm not for it," he said as he hurried across the Ha'penny Bridge.

The bar tariff in the Auld Dubliner in Temple Bar claimed a pint of stout costs 2.89 euros. The Irish Government is spending €300,000 to promote the new currency even though it will not replace the punt for another four years.

Most people seemed to think that was a waste of money but so long as it was European money being wasted who cares? Since joining the European club in 1973 the republic has received €24 billion.

Beyond a set of crash-barriers lay Dublin Castle, the venue for the meeting of 26 European leaders, 2,000 senior EU officials, 2,000 journalists and 400 Irish staff — the largest free bar opened on Irish soil.

A major turn-off for the Dubliners was the absence of human beings on the euro notes. Deliberate, according to the president of the European Monetary Institute (EMI), Alexandre Lamfalussy. "The difficulty with people is that the normal tradition of banknotes is to take a personality and these people usually belong to a country," he explained. "We would have fallen back into the nationalistic bias."

"I'd rather stick with what we've got, these just have no personality," said 17-year-old Joanna Matthews. Ah there they go again, the plain people of Europe getting it wrong. According to the EMI, a sample of 1,000 individuals had rated them highly. Not bad from a Euro-population of 380 million.

One feature of the euro which made Irish eyes smile, however, was the tiny space reserved for a national symbol. The pleasure came from watching the British tabloids working themselves into a frenzy over the Queen's head being shrunk to a fraction of its size on the sterling note. There was no shortage of volunteers to perform the operation.

Bank ready to bury £19bn as cash trade welcomes change

Owen Bowcott

THE Bank of England could replace all £19 billion of notes in circulation with euro currency "as a matter of routine" it said yesterday.

If Britain joined the first wave of monetary union, sterling notes would be shredded, pulped and dumped in landfill sites during the year 2002.

The euro notes which would replace them have been designed to be compatible with the cash dispensers operated by all high street banks and building societies.

"We have carried out similar operations replacing notes when we phased in new £50 notes," a Bank of England spokeswoman said yesterday. "We used to burn the old

notes, but we are environmentally more conscious nowadays. All the old notes would be chopped up and buried in the ground."

The outgoing notes would include a small number of £1 million ones used solely for internal accounting purposes at the Bank of England.

If Britain accepted the timetable for first wave countries, the euros would become currency on January 1, 2002, with sterling withdrawn by July 1. In that six-month interim period, both currencies would be in open circulation.

NCR, which manufactures 80 per cent of Britain's 20,000 cash dispensers, said it would be possible to set their machines to dispense both currencies, and that converting one to deliver euro notes would take no more than an hour.

The new currency has been welcomed in the industry as euros incorporate security features making it easier for machines to count deposits.

As for the outgoing notes, the Bank of England said they would be honoured long after the changeover date — there are, for example, £6.1 million £1 notes still to be redeemed.

"I have a one point plan to save the country. Abolish the licensing laws."

Josh Astor

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Ghanaian gets nod as French drop objections

Annan to be UN secretary-general

Mark Tran in New York

KOPI ANNAN of Ghana was anointed as the next secretary-general of the United Nations by the Security Council yesterday, after France dropped its opposition to a man who has spent almost half his life at the UN.

The end of a week-long impasse, caused by a French "no" in a round of stratagems, was announced by Britain's UN envoy, Sir John Westwood, before a mass of reporters, diplomats and glaring television lights outside the UN Security Council.

France had objected to Mr Annan because he could not speak French, but put an end to its blocking tactics after behind-the-scenes arm-twisting from some of the UN's most powerful members.

The outgoing secretary-general, the Egyptian Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said he was pleased that Africa would have a second five-year term at the helm. Mr Annan had been nominated because the United States vetoed a second term for Mr Boutros-Ghali.

The choice of Mr Annan as the world's top diplomat caps a 30-year career with the organisation that has given the 58-year-old Ghanaian an intimate knowledge of the UN, from budgetary matters to peacekeeping.

Born in Kumasi, Ghana, Mr Annan had not planned on a lifelong career within the organisation he will now head. "I did not set out with the intention of working for the UN," he said last year. "I was looking forward to going home after I had finished my postgraduate studies."

Mr Annan has enjoyed a steady rise through the UN bureaucracy, and it was the Bosnia conflict that first thrust him into the public eye. Although faulted by some for a lack of charisma, his coolness under fire and his straightforward style earned him the respect of those who dealt with him.

He is currently under-secretary general for peacekeeping operations, a position he has held since 1993, but previously worked in various administrative positions — including a spell as assistant

secretary general for programme planning, budget and finance.



Annan maintains African presence at top of the UN

Mr Annan's priority will be to restore morale among staff members demoralised by the damage inflicted to the UN's reputation by the war in Bosnia, during which the organisation was made the scapegoat for the diplomatic shortcomings of Britain, France and the US. The debacle in Bosnia followed the ill-fated nation-building exercise in Somalia, where the UN was forced to pull out with its tail between its legs.

His other urgent task is to act as an effective chief spokesman for the UN and to

promote the organisation, especially to an indifferent American populace.

This was a job for which Mr Boutros-Ghali, despite his acknowledged intellect, proved to be woefully under-qualified. Mr Annan has acknowledged that the UN has suffered from a public relations problem.

"I do not blame the public for not seeing the problems we face. As an organisation we have not told our story well," he said. "People talk of the failings of the UN, forgetting that we have had many success stories. Look at what happened in Namibia, Mozambique, Cambodia and in South Africa during the elections, where we played a major role."

In New York, the UN's financial crisis, due mainly to a US refusal to pay \$1.4 billion in arrears, has also contributed to feelings of despondency. One reason why Mr Annan received the Clinton administration's backing is his hope that he will help win over Republicans on Capitol Hill and pull the UN out of its financial squeeze.

Mr Annan is a popular choice with UN officials, who disliked the autocratic and remote Mr Boutros-Ghali. "I hoped he would get the job, he was the best of the lot," said one UN official. But others have reservations about Mr Annan's leadership qualities, especially given his spotty management record over the years.

There are also lingering doubts as to whether his mild-mannered, soft-spoken character can stand up to the bullying tactics of the big powers. For all his faults, Mr Boutros-Ghali was no wallflower when dealing with the five permanent council members — one reason the US wanted to see the back of him. "If Mr Annan has one weakness, it's his eagerness to please," a UN diplomat said.



A purpose-built road lets Israelis avoid Palestinian areas when travelling to West Bank settlements north of Jerusalem

Likud tempts more settlers with cash

Shayam Bhatia in Jerusalem

THE Israeli cabinet decided yesterday to channel millions of extra pounds to Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The 150,000 settlers will get "priority A" status, which will entitle them to generous tax concessions and government grants.

The arrangement should encourage other Israelis to move to the occupied territories. Government officials

have expressed the hope that the incentives will swell the number of settlers to more than 500,000 by the end of the century.

Nabil Abu Rdaineh, a spokesman in Gaza for the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, said the decision endangered the peace process.

"This is an escalation of the situation," he said. "This could destroy the peace process."

A rally in Khan Younis of more than 20,000 supporters of the Islamic resistance movement Hamas called for more suicide bombings

against Israel. A leaflet distributed at the rally by the military wing, Izzeddin Qassam, invoked the name of Yehiya Ayash, who masterminded several suicide bombings against Israel before being assassinated, presumably by Israeli agents, earlier this year.

It said: "Our response to the martyrdom of Yehiya Ayash... will be violent and painful."

Israel Radio said last night that police were on full alert for new terrorist attacks.

Checkpoints have been set up at main road junctions and

streets have been cordoned off around the Shalom Tower, the tallest building in Tel Aviv and thought to be a desirable and obvious target for attack.

Meanwhile the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which has claimed responsibility for Wednesday's killing near the West Bank town of Hebron of two Jewish settlers, a mother and her 12-year-old son, called on Palestinians to launch a new intifada against Israel.

George Habash, the ageing leader of the PFLP, vowed to continue his terrorist campaign against Israel. He told a rally at the Yarmuk refugee camp near Damascus: "The expansion of settlements requires the masses to renew the intifada against Israel."

The PFLP hopes that disenfranchised supporters of Mr Arafat's mainstream Fatah organisation and members of his police force will join the Damascus-based Palestinian Rejectionist Front, an umbrella organisation of 10 radical Palestinian groups, including both Hamas and the PFLP.

Castro hands White House a potent peace offering

Richard Thomas in Washington

THE UNITED States has received an unusual peace offering from President Fidel Castro of Cuba: six tons of high-grade Colombian cocaine.

The Clinton administration has been trying to rebuild relations with Havana, but officials were taken aback by Cuba's handover of a narcotics haul it seized in October. Wilfredo Fernandez, a spokesman for the US attorney's office, said the Cuban officials who found the cocaine in a Colombian freighter, the Limeira, might testify in the US courts.

The US coastguard had to abandon a search of the ship when it began to sink. The crew were detained on suspicion of drug smuggling, but the case seemed closed when the ship drifted into Cuban waters. The two countries have no formal diplomatic relations. The US has accused President Castro of being in cahoots with the Colombian drug cartels, and the Helms-Burton act, which penalises those trading with Cuba, has widened divisions.

But two congressional delegations, one from Cuba this week, and news of the co-operation prompted hopes that Cuba may be reversing its hostility to the Drug Enforcement Agency.

Clinton spurns critics of Reno

Martin Walker in Washington

PRESIDENT Clinton announced a further wave of cabinet appointments yesterday and, overruling the doubts of his political advisers, reappointed Janet Reno as attorney-general.

The advisers were worried that Ms Reno might be too ready to appoint independent counsel to investigate senior administration members. In keeping her, Mr Clinton signalled that he is not too worried by the prospects of legal action arising from the Whitewater scandal.

Mr Clinton also announced that Congressman Bill Richardson of New Mexico would replace Madeleine Albright as ambassador to the United Nations. Despite his surname, Mr Richardson is a leading member of the Hispanic community, raised in Mexico City by his Mexican mother.

A freelance diplomat who has secured the release of US citizens held in North Korea and last week in Sudan, Mr Richardson is thought to have a better chance of persuading Congress to pay the \$1.4 billion (\$875 million) which the US owes in contributions to the United Nations.

The power of the Dealey dynasty of Chicago was enhanced by the nomination of William Daley, son of the legendary mayor and brother of the current mayor, to be secretary of commerce. The Republicans have slackened their efforts to close this vast sprawl of a ministry, which ranges from the census and the weather bureau to weights and measures and domestic and foreign trade.

Called in three years ago to manage the effort to steer the North American Free Trade agreement through Congress, Mr Daley is expected to continue the late Ron Brown's efforts to turn the commerce department into a hard-selling export agency.

Despite some legal difficulties, Mr Clinton has nominated Charlene Barshefsky as US trade representative. Having represented Canadian timber and foreign trade in private practice, she will need a special waiver of the law which excludes anyone from the USTR job who has worked for foreign governments.

A tough negotiator, known in Japan as "the dragon lady", she has scored some successes in brinkmanship with the Chinese government. Mrs Barshefsky enjoys a love-hate relationship with her European counterpart, Sir Leon Brittan. Earlier this year he accused her of "talking nonsense", she retorted that he was "schizophrenic", and then flew to London to take him to dinner and make up.

Tigers beat the South African heat wave



A game warden, Johnny Fourie, watches tigers Ben (left) and Gal from a nearby zoo as they frolic and cool off at the Hartbeespoort dam, near Pretoria, in the South African mid-summer heat wave

ANC cadres apply for amnesty

Agencies in Pretoria

THREE cabinet ministers and a deputy minister were among 60 members of the ruling African National Congress who applied for amnesty to South Africa's post-apartheid Truth and Reconciliation Commission yesterday, the party's spokesman Ronnie Mamoeba said.

He declined to specify the offences for which Joe Modise, Jay Naidoo, and Sydney Mufamadi — ministers respectively for defence, telecommunications and police and the deputy defence minister, Ronnie Kasrils, were seeking amnesty.

Some ANC leaders have argued that veterans of the ANC's guerrilla army do not need amnesty for actions that were part of "just wars".

President Nelson Mandela extended the cut-off date for amnesty yesterday, making people who committed political crimes any time before his inauguration as president on May 10 1994 eligible. The previous cut-off date was December 6 1993, when a multiracial transitional panel was formed to end white rule.

Bishop Desmond Tutu, the chairman of the commission, had asked for extensions to allow more people to be included.

The Freedom Front leader, Constand Viljoen, once commander of apartheid armed forces, wanted the date moved so that amnesty could be considered for white extremist bombers convicted of killing at least 21 people in the run-up to the all-race elections in April 1994, and others who plotted a coup at the time of the poll.

He was "delighted" by the extension and would be applying for amnesty for acts of resistance before the elections.

The extension will also cover the fatal shooting of eight people by ANC security guards during a Zulu demonstration in March 1994.

Mr Mandela also extended the deadline for applications for amnesty — which was due to expire at midnight tonight — until May 10 1997.

News in brief

35 held in bank siege

Two people received bullet wounds when a disgruntled former bank employee held 35 people hostage in a Paris office yesterday, writes Alex Duval Smith in Paris.

Police said the man, who was arrested after a two-hour siege in Boulevard Haussmann, was a former employee, but they did not give his name or details of his grudge against AD Capital Bank.

Turncoat's salary

Balduccio di Maggio, the turncoat who has accused the former Italian prime minister Giulio Andreotti of kissing the Mafia's "boss of bosses", said at Mr Andreotti's trial in Rome yesterday that he had received \$200,000 in official money since turning state's evidence. — Reuter.

Runway mishap

An Iberia Airlines jet with 103 passengers slid off the runway at Barajas airport, Spain,

while landing in a rainstorm. Passengers said rescue personnel were slow to react to their plight. — AP.

Burma lashes out

Burma and the United States tangled yesterday when Rangoon prevented a US diplomat, Kent Wiedemann, from meeting the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and Angus Washington of interfering in Burma's internal affairs. — Reuter.

Smile Singapore

As part of a "Smile Singapore" campaign to make tourists feel loved, Singapore immigration officers have been given mirrors to check the quality of their expressions. — New York Times.

Gunmen's victims

Tribal militants fighting for autonomy in Kalayaypur village, Tripura state, north-east India, gunned down 22 people and set fire to houses. — AP.

Law firm curbs

China is planning new curbs on foreign law firms that

would limit their business and raise operating costs, foreign lawyers and businessmen said yesterday. The curbs would ban the hiring of Chinese nationals as lawyers or legal assistants. — Reuter.

Death row plea

The Pope has made a personal plea to the United States to spare Joseph O'Dell, a death row inmate just days away from a lethal injection in Virginia, who says he has new DNA evidence that proves his innocence. — Reuter.

Rat killers' party

A dance is to be held in Cebu, Manila, to celebrate the control field rats that are ruining many acres of crops. The entrance "fee" will be 50 rat tails. — AP.

Name of the game

Manhattan Plaza, Monte Carlo Villas and other foreign names have been banned in Canton, south China, in an effort to promote Chinese culture, an official report said yesterday. — AP.

Chris McGreal in Johannesburg

TANZANIAN troops drove tens of thousands of Rwandan Hutu refugees towards their homeland yesterday after preventing them from fleeing deeper into Tanzania.

Large numbers are still walking towards camps which the government wants closed before the end of the month. Several thousand refugees crossed into Rwanda, but many more refused, storming a military cordon in an effort to get back into the camps.

Large numbers are still walking towards Zambia, Malawi and Kenya in an attempt to escape repatriation. Since Thursday about 400,000 refugees have left the camps which have been their home for more than two years.

Yesterday soldiers turned back about 50,000 Rwandans who had fled Benaco camp.

Tanzanian army Colonel Urbano Ngunuzumi told refugees at a roadblock between Benaco and Lumasi that they would not be allowed to go any further into Tanzania.

"Go back to the camps and you will get fed," he said. "We don't want you here. We want you to go back," the colonel said.

But when the refugees approached Benaco, soldiers told them they could not re-enter and ordered them to keep walking to Rwanda.

Although several thousand gave up and returned to their homeland, many more tried to break through the army cordon around the camp. Hundreds dropped their bundles of belongings on the roadside and sprinted across vegetable fields to reach Benaco.

Soldiers wielding sticks kept others at bay. Tens of thousands more were turned back at other roadblocks. But last night it was unclear how

many are still on the move, and in which direction.

The exodus from the camps appears to have been organised. Refugees leaders duped the United Nations into believing the Rwandans were going to cross the border in an attempt to ensure that they received their fortnightly ration of red beans, corn and

cooking oil before they left. Many refugees prepared for the march by harvesting crops and selling off their belongings to Tanzanians.

"They have fooled us incredibly," said Anne Willem Bijleveld, who was in charge of the UN plan to entice the

refugees home. UN officials said they believed the refugees were now heading back voluntarily to their camps because they were no longer under the control of the extremist Hutu militias which led the 1994 genocide.

"It's clear that the [Hutu] refugees, and they are using these people as shields," said Peter Kessler, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Nairobi.

But whether the militias are in control or not, many refugees appear reluctant to return to their homeland. The 50,000 from Benaco who turned back yesterday only did so when confronted by Tanzanian soldiers. And most appeared to want to return to their camps, not to Rwanda.

The Tanzanian home affairs minister, Ali Ameir Mohamed, said his government still expected all Rwan-

dan refugees to leave by the end of the year. The UNHCR has backed that demand, despite criticism that it amounts to an illegal forced repatriation.

Most of the refugees who began fleeing their camps on Thursday were going to the hills of the Burigi Game Reserve, where they will encounter wildlife including tigers and elephants. A spokesman for the World Food Programme, Michele Quintagli, said wild animals could pose a threat to the refugees, but pointed out that some refugees had already been hiding in the park for more than two years.

"These people have been living outside their country since 1994," she said. "They're survivors." The first group of Rwandans fleeing Tanzania arrived in Zambia yesterday after crossing Lake Tanganyika. The UNHCR said it believed many more were following.

Enter the euro
But will it get residential status?

YESTERDAY — make no mistake — marked a vital milestone along the tortuous road to monetary union for Europe. First, and most important from the point of view of ordinary people, it was the day when years of rhetoric were suddenly made flesh — in the form of specimen notes of the proposed euro which will almost certainly become the sole currency for a core of European countries in a little over five years time — irrespective of whether Britain joins or not. The euro is no longer a figment of the imagination: now, for the first time, there is something to see.

Credibly, the embedded symbolism of the designs (bridges, windows and doors) was interpreted in contradictory ways according to the prejudices of the beholder. They reminded Eurosceptic Sir Teddy Taylor that the single currency was a gateway to mass unemployment, a window to misery and a bridge to civil unrest to another critic, Iain Duncan-Smith the note was "an unwelcome child that nobody really wants to own". But if it looks more like a changeling than change, this is because it was, inevitably, designed by a committee determined to avoid offence rather than entering something for the Turner Prize. But to Europhiles the images are on a different plane: they are windows of opportunity, bridges of reconciliation and gateways to a new age in which the member states of a united Europe will never again go to war with each other and will instead bind themselves together in peace by sharing that most powerful of all social cements — a common currency.

The second reason yesterday's unveiling was important is this. Even if Britain doesn't join the single currency it won't be able to avoid it. Sooner or later it will invade Britain. People will start to take out euro-denominated plastic cards when they visit Europe: some will want euro-savings accounts: others will want their mortgages backed by the "strong" euro — which may lead to some salaries being paid in euros in order to avoid having to repay a mortgage in a strong currency (the euro) out of wages paid in what might be a depreciating one (sterling). Companies like BMW which by then will be paying all their Continental subsidiaries in euros will probably be only too happy to offer similar facilities to its Rover employees in Britain. By that time shops like Tesco and Sainsbury — thanks to advances in electronic money — will be able to accept payments in either currency. In other words, if a core group of EU members, as seems likely, goes ahead with monetary union the whole European monetary scene will be changed whether we like it or not. At the very least everyone in Britain will have the choice whether to accept the euro or not as individuals even if at the national level the government of the day rejects it.

The third reason yesterday was important was that a deal appears to have been struck on the so-called "stability pact" which removes one of the last remaining obstacles to Continental acceptance of monetary union. Under the Maastricht agreement countries are prohibited from allowing their budget deficits to go above a ceiling of 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). That will affect British economic policy even if the UK doesn't sign up because the Maastricht criteria will become the standard by which the international markets judge British economic policy whether we are in or out of the single currency. The problem is that if one or more countries decide to let their deficits rise to 4 or 5 per cent of GDP then the burden of coping with it would fall on other countries who would either have to transfer resources (cash) or suffer higher interest rates. There have to be some penalties but if the original German plan of automatic fines running into billions of pounds on recalcitrant countries had been accepted, it would have risked a massive social backlash in the guilty countries. To impose fixed fines on countries with heavy deficits by forcing them to hand over more money is a bit like treating haemophilia with bloodletting. Yesterday's compromise — with escape clauses for countries in recession at the discretion of the Council of Ministers — has fault-lines of its own (like would the Council ever have the courage to apply sanctions?) but at least it looks as though a formula has been found that may be more acceptable to German public opinion. It remains to be seen whether the increasing likelihood of the single currency going ahead on the mainland of Europe — supported now by the prospect of real euro notes — will start to roll back the increasingly hostile tide of public opinion. The answer is that it probably won't unless Labour both wins the general election and adopts a sustained strategy for winning the argument.

Rig of the year award
Laced with a powerful whiff of hypocrisy

THE DISCOVERY that the Labour Party has been trying to rig the Today programme contest for Man of the Year has caused the party deserved embarrassment. But the people who ought to feel most ashamed are the BBC, for perpetuating this enterprise despite years of attempts at rigging it. When it started on the World at One — which later had the sense to get rid of it — Powellites swamped it with write-in votes. Then the Thatcherites took over. The greener BBC spokespeople may believe that the contest affords, as one of them put it yesterday, "a spontaneous opportunity for the programme's listeners to express their point of view" but few others are so deluded — especially after John Major's strong showing last year.

Labour's defence carries a powerful whiff of hypocrisy. Junior employees carried away by zeal, never any intention of staging such stunts, etc. Yet the unfortunate perpetrator of this horror, Ms Hurry, works for an Audience Participation Unit whose whole raison d'être is rigging: getting known Labour sympathisers into audiences which unsuspecting viewers might take as cross-sections of humanity. If Tony Blair was really so shocked by Ms Hurry's excesses he would close down the unit. But he won't, any more than the Tories would. They are all in this together.

Yet dumping the Man of the Year competition would at least remove one potent temptation from itchy spin-doctor hands. James Naughtie, John Humphrys and Sue MacGregor should refuse to have anything more to do with it, making it clear they will all resign unless it is junked. The whole ridiculous enterprise could then be reallocated somewhere on Radio 1, in the care of Dale Winton, or merged with the Saturday Night TV lottery show, where — if anywhere — it belongs.

Letters to the Editor

A minister takes the stage

READ Maureen Lipman's article with interest (TV drama shock horror, December 12). The facts are as follows: European Community Directive 92/100 gives performers a right to equitable remuneration when films in which they have performed are rented by the public.

To obtain these rights in respect of any films made under agreements entered into before July 1, 1994, performers need to submit notifications before January 1, 1997 to producers. While it is up to performers to submit notifications, there is no reason why this cannot be done on their behalf by professional agents or advisers, or organisations such as Equity.

The Regulations implementing the Directive were passed by the British Parliament on November 25, 1996, after delays caused partly by extensive consultation, including with Equity. However, the Directive was originally adopted in 1992. It has also been implemented in other countries since then. The deadline for notifications of the end of the year would be retained. That had also been indicated in a consultative draft circulated in early 1995 to interested parties, including Equity. Performers and their advisers have, therefore, had some time to prepare for the new rights. We have never considered that the Regulations had to have entered into force before the process of submitting notifications could begin.

The Government values highly the contribution made by British performers to the success of the film industry, English-language films, and therefore welcomes the harmonising effect of the "rental" Directive which will bring British performers valuable benefits throughout the Community. Ian Taylor MP, Minister for Science and Technology, DfT, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1E 0ET.

MAUREEN Lipman draws attention to the cavalier approach the Government has taken to performers. But this is merely a repeat performance of the tactics used in legislating for extension of the copyright term last year to life of the author plus 70 years. Extensive consultation did take place, albeit belatedly and hurriedly. As with the Statutory Instrument on rental and lending, so too with term. The latter was passed at breakfast speed just before the summer recess last year so that the UK did not fall foul of the serious effects of late implementation of an EU Directive. Yet the lesson was not learned, or rather the Government chose not to learn from it. The consultation process involved both the stronger and weaker negotiating parties but, inevitably, the stronger had the funds to lobby longer and harder.

The SI comes down clearly on the side of the stronger party in two ways. It requires that authors, composers, artists and performers give notice by December 31, 1996, of any intention to exercise their right to equitable remuneration where rental arises out of agreements concluded before July, 1994.

How such notification should be given is not clear, although we assume it is to be in writing. But, as Ms Lipman's article, here comes the rub: with most take-overs and production companies folding, against whom should the individual exercise the right to such remuneration? Onerous expenditure is already being incurred by authors, performers, their agents and associations who may also have to take legal action to resolve the uncertainty.

Once again, the underlying rights owners, without whose creative input there would be no cultural heritage, have been short-changed. Maureen Duffy, Chairman, British Copyright Council, Copyright House, 29-33 Berners Street, London W1P 4AA.

Writers, musicians, composers and entertainers are the only workers of the world who apparently have the right to be paid over and over again for their work. Suppose the same principle was applied to other workers or professional people? Because the building an architect designed back in 1960, say, is still being used daily without structural alteration, should he be paid a royalty by those who enjoy its facilities? F A Beal, 21 Gwyneth Street, Cathays, Cardiff CF2 4PH.

The euro, yet again proving a spur to disagreement

YOU quote with approval (Leader, December 12) the Chancellor's view that a single currency is desirable for Britain because of the effects on interest rates and on public finances in other European countries. May I dissent? Real long-term (bond) interest rates are broadly uniform throughout the global economy, and are mainly determined by worldwide demand and supply of loanable funds. Long-term interest rates, expressed in national currencies, approximate to worldwide real inflation rates and any default risk as perceived by the bond market. Short-term interest rates oscillate around the long-term rate in response to short-term forces affecting each national economy.

The creation of a European common currency will reduce the general level of real rates only insofar as it reduces worldwide demand for loanable funds relative to supply. The mechanism that is envisaged by supporters of a single currency in the enforced reduction of borrowing by some European governments. The relative importance of these "excessive" borrowers in the world economy is so limited that, even if Maastricht criteria continued to be rigorously applied, the effect on world interest rates would be imperceptible. Borrowing by British governments is unlikely to be significantly reduced if we joined the euro, so our choice would have practically no effect on global real interest rates.

Money interest rates in euros and national currencies will continue to be influenced by expectations of inflation, and, in turn, by past experience of inflation and of domestic macro-economic policies. Domestic interest rates have been kept low by long experience of low inflation and rigorous policies. The operation of any stability pact, which (as you and the Chancellor advocate) would reflect political forces in all countries using euros, is most unlikely to match the experience of the D-mark.

If British governments continue to follow relatively cautious economic policies outside the euro system, our real interest rates would not be affected at all and money rates could fall below those of any truly European euro. (Prof) Alan Day, Chart Place, Church Sutton, Maidstone ME17 3RE.

Vote for a new electoral system

IAN AITKEN says that most advocates of electoral reform do so out of self-interest, arguing that Jim Bolger's National Party lost the New Zealand election but has been re-elected in Winston Peter's NZ-First Party through backroom deals (PR turns politics upside-down down under, December 12).

Let's examine the facts. The National Party gained 33.8 per cent of the vote, nearly 6 per cent more than its nearest rival, Labour. If we look at the 65 first-past-the-post seats, the National Party, with its right-wing allies, won 32. At the last FPTP general election in 1993, the National Party won 55.5 per cent and had an absolute majority. IANZ-First had gone into coalition with Labour, the critics would have said that the most popular party had been deprived of power by PR.

Mr Aitken is right that the majority of voters in opinion polls preferred an NZ-First/Labour coalition. One of the problems with the type of PR used in New Zealand, MMP, also known as the Additional Member System — is that it does not allow the voter to indicate his or her preference for a coalition government.

This problem would be solved if New Zealand adopted a preferential voting system, such as used in Ireland. We in Britain should look again at the types of electoral reform on offer and choose one, not only on the basis of fairness to parties, but also on maximising the voter's choice and influence.

Feter Facey, Director of Officers, Electoral Reform Society, 6 Chancel Street, London SE1 0UU.

IAN Aitken implies that Britain would be lumbered with an unpopular, un-elected government if it chose proportional representation. But did it not occur to him that this is what Britain has had for four and a half years.

Instead of eight weeks of negotiations to form an agreement between parties (which should entail the publication of a detailed programme of government), Britain has had years of infighting and power struggles, which may ultimately give power to a minority, ie the Eurosceptics in the Conservative Party.

Mr Aitken should look to Ireland. The electoral system here may give eight weeks of uncertainty, but can at least be followed by years of relative stability, rather than the other way around.

Koim O'Malley, 16 Temple Villas, Palmerstown Road, Dublin 6.

We regret we cannot acknowledge receipt of letters. We may edit them: shorter ones are more likely to appear.

Let's foster the carers

THE most worrying aspect of the Social Services Inspectorate report (Fostering reviewed after "serious failings" found, December 13) is the disclosure that many children had not had a comprehensive assessment of their needs. This failure is symptomatic of the low priority often given to foster care.

Although two thirds of the children looked after by local authorities in New Zealand are in foster care, the service continues to be the poor relation of the childcare system. Foster carers are expected to provide care for some of our most vulnerable children and young people yet they are often given inadequate training, support and financial reward.

Often, they have insufficient information on the children they are expected to care for. Even where thorough assessments are made, there may be an insufficient range of placements available to meet each child's needs. There is a particular shortage of carers for ethnic minority children and sibling groups. Greater emphasis needs to be given to developing recruitment strategies based on identified local needs.

Gerrit McAndrew, Executive Director, National Foster Care Association, Leonard House, 100 Albany Road, London SE11 1EP.

It is outrageous that the Football Association should ask for Lottery money to fund a bid for the 2006 World Cup (December 12). It has done everything in its power to reduce the number of people who can afford to watch Premier League football: to take the fans away to a game, costs a fortune; to watch live games at home you must pay SkyB, and we are well on the way to paying per view.

The Lottery money is for "good causes". I don't think many people would describe the FA as a good cause. B Emerson, 41 Charles Street, Selby, N Yorks YO8 0DA.

LONDON'S helicopter emergency ambulance saves lives and reduces the likelihood of long-term disability following major trauma (Greater London ambulance urges report, December 12). It also saves the NHS a considerable sum of money each year.

Arguing that ambulances often arrive before the helicopter unless the point that the helicopter brings a doctor, skilled in managing trauma and anaesthetising patients, to the scene of an accident. Gerry Green, The Royal Hospitals Trust, London E1 1BB.

Cock-up of the Year 1996

THE cock-up theory of attempts to rig the Today Personality of the Year Award is all too plausible (Award chase hands Blair cock-up of the year, December 12). At Labour's conference, I was approached by one of Peter Mandelson's ubiquitous Shephard Children anxious to persuade me of the benefits of modernisation. I mentioned Keir Hardie. "Oh," she squealed, "I read him in the Guardian every Saturday." With political sophistication like that, anything is possible.

Brian Bethell, 3 Cherry Drive, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8EP.

HAVE you ever met anyone who has voted in the Today Personality of the Year contest? I haven't. David Hughes, 42 Langroyd Road, London SW17 7PL.

Work, play and rescue

IN her advocacy of gender and race quotas, Susan Gibb (Letters, December 12) forgets that two out of three newly-created jobs go to women and that the majority of long-term jobless are men. If a quota system is to be introduced, it should be unbiased towards young, working-class males, whose chronic unemployment results in violence and alienation, and feeds the growing backlash against middle-class feminism. (Dr) Aidan Healy, 51 Guilford Court, London WC1N 1ES.

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When honour is not satisfied

DOES the resignation of David Willetts really represent a "clear-cut victory for self-regulation" of Parliament under the auspices of the Nolan rules, as you report (Willetts pays the price, December 12)? Surely the manner of that resignation — with Mr Willetts protesting his innocence, and the Prime Minister giving credence to those protestations — shows instead that the gaping vacuum of responsibility at the heart of British politics, identified by Lord Nolan, is as wide as ever?

Dealing with the Prime Minister's responsibilities on ministerial misconduct, Nolan recommended that the first paragraph of Questions of Procedure for Ministers should be amended to read as follows: "It will be for individual ministers to judge how best to act in order to uphold the highest standards. It will be for the Prime Minister to determine whether or not they have done so in any particular circumstance." Downing Street's response was to bat the ball back to Parliament — ignoring the fact that lack of confidence in the probity of Parliament was the very problem Nolan was asked to investigate.

Harry Eyre, 41 Tunstall Road, London SW9 8EZ.

THE notion that Mr Willetts has "done a honourable thing" by resigning is humbug. The condemnation was for his conduct in relation to the quality of the evidence he gave, as a Member of Parliament, to a Commons committee. It is thus his conduct as an MP which has been criticised. "The honourable thing" would be for him to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds and, if he feels he has done no wrong, to seek re-election. Roy Roebuck, 12 Brooksbury Street, London N1 1HA.

DOES the David Willetts affair not demonstrate yet again the British dislike of intelligence? There were so many snide remarks about his cleverness that one could not help wondering if this was his real sin. G Smith, 25 Cliff Street, Clayton West, Huddersfield.

NOW that David Willetts has established his capacity to dissemble, perhaps he should join Conservative Central Offices where his abilities could flourish. Peter Murray, 41 Logan Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8DT.

A Country Diary

MACHYNLETT: Somewhere far back in geological time, the rocks at the east end of what is now the Cader Idris range split apart in quite a big way and, despite an unimaginable amount of erosion, that split still leaves its bold mark across the landscape. The Talylyn Pass between Machynlleth and Dolgellau is part of it. Riding through it in 1773, Thomas Pennant was truly alarmed by the "rude and savage nature" of the scene. "The sides are broken into a thousand crags — the greater part impend in such a manner as to render the apprehension of their fall tremendous."

Little has changed. Those rocks still look precariously balanced up there, waiting only for the next hefty earth tremor. At the bottom of the pass is the well-known Talylyn lake, described in Black's Guide of 1873 as "truly beautiful but hardly deserving the extravagant eulogies which have been bestowed upon it."

Never mind, it is a delightful water, much photographed and painted, one of the pearls of Snowdonia. Yet it is not that long since we were shocked by a vandalistic proposal to convert this charming lake into a hydro-electric reservoir. Like the now-ruined Llyn Peris near Llanberis, Happily, the lake at Talylyn remains much the same as it was when Pennant wrote: "Went by Llyn y Mynll, a beautiful lake about a mile long, which so far fills the valley as to leave only a narrow road on one side."

It is by that narrow road that I write this diary. The sun shines on the far bank and all up the colourful slopes of Cader as I watch the waterbirds: a scattering of coots, porphyries like the now-ruined Llyn Peris near Llanberis. Happily, the lake at Talylyn remains much the same as it was when Pennant wrote: "Went by Llyn y Mynll, a beautiful lake about a mile long, which so far fills the valley as to leave only a narrow road on one side."

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How a winning personality can lose a poll



Mark Lawson

THE news that the BBC Radio 4 Today programme will accept no further nominations this year for its annual Personality of the Year poll — the first evidence of a Labour Party plot to rig the vote in favour of Tony Blair — is grim news for those of us on these pages who had just finished licking the last stamp and faking the final signature in a massive campaign to secure the nomination for Peter Mandelson.

We hoped finally to win recognition for his coy and largely unacknowledged backroom efforts on behalf of Tony Blair. Our counterfeit letters must now remain un-sent and, to compound Mr Mandelson's misfortune, he finds himself widely blamed for the Personality of the Year scam involving Mr Blair. It is amusing, with the exception of the junior employee in Mr Mandelson's campaign unit who wrote the memo encouraging Labour activists to bombard Today with calls — on a nudge from above. But it cannot be denied — even by a skilled spin doctor — that this was one of two serious defeats for Labour on the same day in the area of presentational or symbolic politics, Mandelson's area of expertise.

Simultaneously, in the Spectator, the Spice Girls, Britain's new girls supergroup, came out as Tony-voting and Eurosceptic. This endorsement may well hit Labour among younger voters — presumably the Labour campaign unit is even now working to depress the votes for Geri or Mel C of the Spice Girls in the Women of the Year poll — while ratings among the middle-aged and middle-class might suffer from being caught interfering with a Radio 4 institution. It couldn't have been much worse if Mr Blair had been accused of goosing Jill Archer.

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صلى الله عليه وسلم

Unhappy dawn for the new Hong Kong

Commentary
Martin Woollacott

SOME things are so unpleasant that we enter into a conspiracy to pretend they are less terrible than they are. So it is with the humiliation heaped on Britain and the flouting of the wishes of the people of Hong Kong that have had to be endured this week as the Chinese rigged the selection of a new Chief Executive and then coolly proceeded with the rigging of a new legislature for the territory.

Hong Kong, its expatriate population, consisting mainly of very recent arrivals, is on the whole mindlessly optimistic about the future. British pension funds continue to pour money into the local stock market, adding to the superficial view that the territory's economy is effortlessly riding the wave of political change. In London, the faction in the political and business establishment that has opposed and undermined Chris Patten similarly projects the idea that, with his "mistakes" about democracy now brushed aside, a business-as-usual regime can be pragmatically welcomed.

Itable contest with other Chinese centres. The handover in Hong Kong has been accompanied by an open triumphalism which is more and more stressed that Taiwan must soon follow Hong Kong back to the fold. The "election" of CH Tung is, said the China Daily, "the first step of the Chinese nation's great undertaking to realise reunification of the motherland." President Jiang Zemin underlined the point in an interview in which he said that "the Communist Party of China... will not allow any person, any force to split Taiwan from the motherland." In other recent blasts, China warned the United States against selling arms to Taiwan, told the Vatican to "cease its interference" in Chinese affairs and, in Singapore, its representative complained that China was being kept out of the World Trade Organisation for political reasons.

may have been in the main an excuse for inaction on political and human rights questions, so as not to suffer the codign punishment which China applies to those who cross her. By manipulating trade possibilities — an airplane order here, a machine tools order there — China effortlessly divides and rules. The process divides the Europeans among themselves, the Americans, and within the United States, the business community from the advocates of human rights. You would think that we would learn, but it works every time. There is nothing more sickening than the smirk on the face of a Western trade minister

Kong. It did not do so because the Chinese would have been angered and, no doubt, because there could be no expectation of solidarity. But, although Britain could not do much, international business interests and although it received some help from the United States here and there, it had to conduct the struggle to equip Hong Kong for its future inside China essentially on its own. China is in the throes of a nationalist revival. There is a huge emphasis on sport, a revival of the lame model figures and popular "heroes" which proliferated in Mao's day, and the encouragement of anti-Western posturing by young writers. As in the Balkans, a pumped up nationalism is brought in to fill the vacuum left by a Marxist-Leninist ideology that has expired.

After a Tory ice age

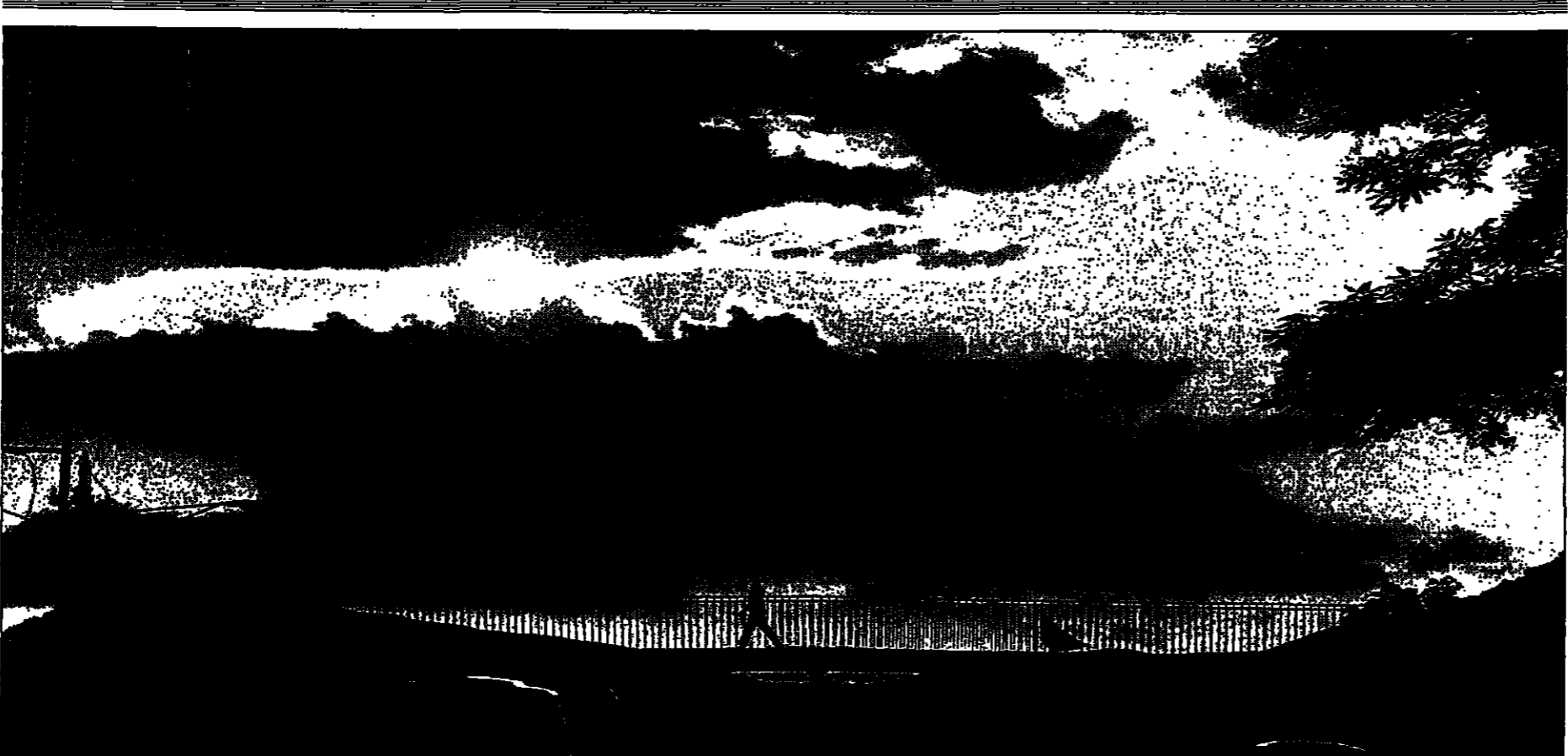


Martin Kettle

ACCORDING to John Major's spin doctors, the Prime Minister recorded last Sunday's television interview with John Humphrys early. The reason, we were told, was so that he could enjoy a peaceful traditional lunch at home with his family. An understandable touch of domesticity if so, but the more fool he. For if Major had stayed in front of the box but had watched ITV while his own interview was going out on BBC — he might have glimpsed how the Conservative Party may eventually recover, years from now, from the electoral abyss into which it has fallen under his leadership.

The British have been had, and the people of Hong Kong with them

after just learning that another Western country has got into a human-rights row with China. Nobody looking at the record could deny that Chinese sanctions against Western countries have been infinitely more effective than our sanctions against them. It is not possible to prove that Hong Kong has formed part of that pattern, for the simple reason that Britain never asked either the United States or its European partners for support in the wrangle over Hong



Building bridges... a man crosses the highway between Pietermaritzburg, a city traditionally dominated by whites, and its satellite black townships

Waiting for the flowers

For South Africans black and white, the ending of apartheid without war was a miracle. But life doesn't stay miraculous, and new ways of living together have to be found. **Jo-Anne Richards** tells of the primordial emotional upheavals provoked by the quest

IN LATE winter each year, when the air is still brittle and dry, I wait for the jasmine to bloom. I keep watch, while the grass is still yellow and fine-dusted, for the first bursting of white blossoms to awaken all hibernating hopes — not just for myself, but, strangely, for the country too.

being strapped to a black woman's back, and, some where deep in our gut, the throb of pennywhistle jazz. I was presumptuous, he said, in suggesting this might be true, to some extent, for blacks. "When I interview blacks now, they say the miracle's gone. They say whites beat about delivery, but give nothing back."

middle-class people always lived. In some ways, it's quite sad. I always used to know the places to go, the places that were cool. Now people have moved out, gone to the white suburbs. It's all changed."

Phetole, now a civil servant, trained as a guerrilla after 1976. "I miss the way we believed in a cause, and in our leaders. We had a strong, almost mystical mission. Now our leaders are just politicians. And what is my mission? I have a mortgage and a car payment."

Modern conservatism has followed a scorched earth approach to local government. The years of absolute power at Westminster have encouraged it to hack local government apart, weaken the powers of town and county halls, and to pull up the party's own local authority grass roots. The collapse of the party at local level is in no small way explained by the Conservatives' reckless abandonment of local government.

Spend Xmas with Auntie
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THIS WEEK'S essayist, Jo-Anne Richards, is a writer in Johannesburg. Her first novel, *The Innocence of Roast Chicken* (Hodder Headline), was a rural childhood into the emergence of the new South Africa. As an investigative journalist in the mid-90s she suffered protracted state harassment for her reports on police torture of prisoners. She co-wrote *Edgewise Under Fire*, about newspapers under apartheid.

REPUTATIONS — the forensic accountant

The BCCI inquiry threw Stephen Akers into rather murky waters. But he can't be bothered with a bodyguard, PATRICK DONOVAN discovers



Watching the detectives... Stephen Akers has spent the last five years leading a team of accountants unravelling the most audacious fraud in the history of world banking, involving 150 million documents.

Unravelling a global cobweb

WHEN someone knows as much about the murky finances of the world's top cocaine barons and arms dealers as Stephen Akers does, one is probably entitled to feel concern about one's personal safety. Ever the down-to-earth accountant, 42-year old Mr Akers can't be doing with the bother of a full-time bodyguard. But he does admit that he goes through phases of checking for sinister packages under his car. And he parries questions about whether his home (somewhere in Buckinghamshire is the closest he'll go) is linked up with a hot line to the police with a wry "no comment".

But then this is the price you pay for leading the 500-strong army of Deloitte & Touche accountants who for the past five-and-a-half years have devoted themselves to unravelling the biggest and most audacious fraud in the history of world banking: the collapse of the Abu Dhabi-based Bank of Credit and Commerce International. Costing \$1 million a week in travel and hotel expenses alone, these battalions of highly paid auditors crawled through more than 150 million documents. This week it was announced that the bank's 25,000 creditors are to be repaid almost 25p in the pound on everything they lost. It was an operation which created its own *esprit de*

corps, like the regular quiz evenings at a local City pub packed out with everybody on the BCCI team. There was a hefty personal price to pay, even though some of the young single accountants took advantage of being thrown together for long periods in often exotic locations with members of the opposite sex. At least a dozen relationships have been one of the byproducts of the BCCI affair. But for family men like Mr Akers it has clearly been a gruelling five years of skimpy holidays, jet lag and hotel dinners watching CNN. As he thinks back on how his life changed on July 5, 1991 (when BCCI came crashing down), Mr Akers gratefully acknowledges that in Jane he

has a very supportive wife. For from that date he spent most of his life on aeroplanes, leaving little time for his children, Nicola, 11, and Richard, aged eight. THE drama began to unfold just before lunch at Heathrow's Pentia Hotel. Mr Akers is hardly likely to forget it. Joining the firm after studying maths at Leicester University, Mr Akers quickly rose to become one of Deloitte's youngest partners, specialising in corporate recovery. He quickly established a reputation in the textiles business, and there were ripe pickings as Britain's industry tipped into recession. And he had arrived at the reg-

ular partners' meeting to talk shop, schmooze with colleagues and no doubt chew over office politics. Fat chance. A call came through from the Bank of England. It was picked up by the lead partner, Brian Smooha, who was immediately asked to take over BCCI as provisional liquidator. Within a couple of hours Mr Akers and four hand-picked colleagues were in a taxi back to central London. And just about to start work on a task which would take over their lives and that of 500-plus colleagues. The scale of the crisis became apparent as soon as the Deloitte team commanded an office in BCCI's London headquarters at 70 Leadenhall Street. There was the misery of depositors confronted with a worldwide freeze on their deposits. Mr Akers tells the story of a woman tourist who had arrived on the day the bank shut to change a hefty wedge of traveller's cheques to finance her stay in London. Told this might take a little time she was advised to come back later. Unfortunately, when she returned, the entire BCCI network had been closed down. And a Barlow Clowes victim put all his compensation into the bank just before his assets were frozen. Customers were traumatised. Staff were running around like frightened rabbits. This bank, which after all had representation in 60 countries, still had potentially financially catastrophic positions open in some of its activities such as trade finance. To complicate matters, Mr Akers and his staff had discovered that one of their adjoining offices at BCCI had been taken over by the intelligence services. Police inquiries were met with the flash of a warrant card and the order to get out. Worse still, Deloitte could not even trust the BCCI staff. The bank had got 1,300 em-

ployees. Because of the scale of the accusations, we didn't know who we could rely on among the staff. We couldn't take that risk. We had to replace them with our people or from clearing banks. From the start, it was a case of logistics. A "war room", open 24 hours a day to co-ordinate worldwide developments was established on the first floor of BCCI's head offices. Travel expenses began to rise as a handful of partners flew out Club Class to stay at the Inter-Continental in Abu Dhabi to try to get access to the BCCI headquarters. Accountants had to negotiate their way past armed guards. And BCCI initially prevented them from removing files. The investigation, which has cost the almost unimaginable sum of \$300 million, spread to 130 countries.

"prayers meeting" at 8am, staff were divided into a dozen task forces headed up by a Deloitte partner. Functions spanned loans, treasury, information technology (BCCI used a mainframe system which was rejected as unsafe by clearing banks a decade before), trade finance and forensic. The forensic division came up trumps, discovering a huge web of suspect loans to the Gulf Shipping Group, which had itself been looked at by the Serious Fraud Office. Such was the scale of the \$1.5 billion exposure to Gulf that the loans were more than the bank's entire share capital. At the same time, Deloitte was fighting to get its hands on BCCI's US assets. This resulted in the farcical situation of Deloitte having to plead guilty in court to charges including assisting terrorism and money laundering in order to be given control of half the bank's North American interests. Within the first two years, progress really came on apace as the mountain of 150 million documents was wired up to a computer system: a phenomenally time-intensive process with about 100 people carrying out the indexing. But as the extraordinary saga draws to a close, Mr Akers reflects that several shadowy characters have slipped through the net. Like the elusive Saudi, Ghath Pharoan, who at one point had the US Sixth Fleet on his tail when he was rumoured to be on the run in a yacht in the Mediterranean. Or the identity of the thousands of BCCI depositors who have yet to lay claims to outstanding funds worth \$1 billion. Mr Akers now has more time to coach his son's football team, the Chesham United 9s. But he accepts that if the same opportunity to carry out such a wide-ranging fraud came along, he'd probably be ready to do it all over again.

New readers start here

• Pakistani banker **Agnes Hameed** founds BCCI in 1972: to act as bridge between the first and the third world. It is incorporated in Luxembourg and has headquarters in London. Within a year it has six offices.
 • By 1975 BCCI has expanded to 146 branches in 32 countries with assets of \$2.2 billion and \$113 million in capital. It is the largest foreign-owned bank in the UK.
 • Bank's losses start appearing in accounts in 1977. The following year the Bank of England refuses a full banking licence.
 • By the early 1980s BCCI has become the preferred bank for customers who require a discrete service including the CIA, *Defence Intelligence Agency*, arms smugglers and various third world dictators.
 • In the mid-eighties, there is gathering evidence of financial irregularities, *corruption* and *criminal involvement*. A 1985 report by the *House of Commons* highlights the bank's activities.
 • In 1988 the Bank of England asks PW to carry out a *Section 17* inquiry. They find evidence of massive fraud. The bank's assets, *held by the trustees of \$1.4 billion*, in submission to the inquiry, the Bank of England says "BCCI has never been profitable in its entire history".
 • The *Financial Institutions Agreement* was initiated in 1992, but *blocked by an appeal*. A second agreement in 1994 was also *blocked by the appeal* and the courts approved the payout.
 • *Deloitte* begins its investigation into the bank's activities.

From the very start we knew the bank was riddled with fraud," says Mr Akers.

"There was a very strong smell of fraud and connections with drug money." AS the web of international intrigue widened, Deloitte found itself in contact with the agencies such as the National Drugs Intelligence Unit, also interested in investigating BCCI. "We were told by Robert Morgenthau, District Attorney of New York, that this bank was rotten," he says. But the big breakthrough came in the first year. The key was organisation, co-ordinating the hundreds of accountants around the world. From the London headquarters which operated a daily

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Finns going down to the wire

Euro Eye

when it made sure it joined the exchange rate mechanism in time to make the two-year membership qualification required for EMU. But, as Jaakko Ikonen, managing director of the Helsinki-based Centre for Finnish Business and Politics Studies, notes: "How ordinary people think [about EMU] is one thing, how the political leadership feels is something different." It depends how the question is posed. Ask the Finns if their country should be in the first wave of those signing up for the single currency and 45 per cent fall into the "no" or "not really" category. Less than one in 10 is enthusiastic. Give the issue a different spin, and suggest that it could be fatal for Finland to remain aloof if most of the rest of the countries in the European Union sign up and opinion shifts, with 43 per cent agreeing; barely one in five reckons the country could risk going it alone. Finland's economy has traditionally depended on

the highly cyclical paper and pulp industry — although the industrial base has widened in recent years with the development of an electronics industry clustered round the telecommunications company Nokia. The narrow base has made Finland more vulnerable to asymmetric shocks compared with countries that have more diverse economies. The traditional answer has been to devalue the market, an option that would be ruled out once the country signed up for monetary union. Finnish economists' alternative is hardly a comfortable one. They calculate the equivalent effect of a 10 per cent devaluation could be achieved by a 3 to 4 percentage-point fall in nominal wages. Both sides of Finnish industry are looking at possibilities of building a substantial slice of profit-sharing into pay structures which would create a cushion, allowing a fall in wages during hard times. Trade unions are keen that alter-

native measures, such as a series of dedicated funds that could be used to smooth economic shocks, should be studied. The Finns are also concerned about the attitude of their neighbours and rivals, the Swedes. If the Swedes stayed out of the single currency that would open the option of competitive devaluation if recession hit the forest-products industry. Some Finns argue that devaluation is no longer a realistic alternative for either country because of the retribution in the form of higher interest rates and higher inflation. But, having signed up to the Maastricht treaty, are not the Finns already committed? Few think so and much thought has been given to how parliament will deal with monetary union. Finland's political and business leaders will push hard for membership but, as one Finnish businessman put it: if, come the day, it does not want to join, then the rest of the EU can hardly force it to do so.

صوتنا من الامم

Citicorp scraps plans to buy Amex in history's biggest takeover • Merger fever gets overheated

\$40bn deal is off the cards

Mark Tran in New York

CITICORP, America's second-largest bank, has abandoned plans to take over American Express in what would have been the largest buy-out in history.

Until last week the bank was negotiating to purchase the financial services company for up to \$40 billion (£25 billion). This would have topped the \$25 billion group of food and tobacco buy-outs RJR Nabisco by corporate raider Kohlberg Kravis Roberts in 1989.

The mega-merger is thought to have collapsed because of the price. "An American Express has been in play for a long time. It

has a huge retail franchise, but if it had a weakness it was on its international side, where Citicorp has an overwhelming advantage. But I wonder if the talks really went that far, because of the price issue."

While Amex has a market capitalisation of about \$28 billion, observers said it could have cost as much as \$40 billion, given the prices financial institutions are fetching in the wave of mergers and acquisitions sweeping the US financial sector.

At that price, Amex would have been a hefty acquisition even for Citicorp, which has a market capitalisation of \$50 billion.

"Very few institutions would be in a position to buy Amex,

digesting Chemical, while BankAmerica is in the midst of a large restructuring. The merger of Citicorp and Amex would have created a financial powerhouse in credit cards and services with significant savings and marketing opportunities. Amex could have marketed its products to nearly 40 million Citicorp cardholders in the US, while Citicorp would have become owner of America's largest corporate card business.

Moreover, the acquisition of Amex's rapidly growing Financial Advisors unit would have given Citicorp an instant presence in the fee-based asset-management business, an area that many banks see as a steady and reliable source of income.



But Citicorp probably would have had to give up its MasterCard and Visa operations because both prohibit their members from issuing American Express cards. Those rules, which are under investigation by the Justice Department for possible anti-trust violation, have blocked Amex's efforts to persuade American banks to issue its cards—a crucial impediment to its efforts to expand its flagship charge-card business.

The merger talks, involving Citicorp chairman John Reed and Amex counterpart Harvey Golub, reportedly began in November and ended last week. Mr Golub initiated the discussions and the two men met several times.

Notebook

The seductive allure of the euro



Alex Brummer

THE significance of the birth of the euro range of banknotes should not be underestimated. Although banknotes per se represent a modest 6 per cent of the European Union's gross domestic product, the appearance of the first specimen notes does remove monetary union from the realms of fantasy. The great European public, which until now has had great difficulty coming to grips with the concept of monetary union, can now almost feel the crisp new notes—in handsome colours—in their hands.

In some respects, although this aspect of Dublin was pre-cooked, it could psychologically prove more important in the great European debate, both in the UK and on the Continent, than the more esoteric aspects of monetary union which have kept finance ministers and heads of government locked in combat for 48-hours. When the European Union symbol of a circle of stars, is replaced with a national emblem—be it the Queen's head, the dome of St Paul's or even the Union Jack—it will be that much more difficult to oppose the euro on the basis of it being something alien.

Indeed, anyone thinking back to a post-second world war era when a pound bought four dollars or eight German marks, might start to feel eternally grateful that Britain has notes, which like their continental counterparts, will have a constant value in Europe and against the US dollar. Although there is a view at the European Monetary Institute in Frankfurt, the precursor to the European central bank, that a euro devaluation against the dollar might be quite useful before the final locking of exchange rates takes place on January 1, 1999.

was first proposed by the Germans, and of ensuring that the euro be at least as hard a currency as the mark, that it was seen as lunatic, mechanistic exercise of Germanic birth which has no chance of winning wider acceptance. What is remarkable is that finance ministers and heads of government in Dublin were firm enough to hammer out a stability deal at all, let alone one which would satisfy the Frankfurt-Bonn axis.

As it stands, the stability pact does provide get-out clauses with the right to return of fines/balances in the case of recession in the range of a 0.75 per cent to 2 per cent downturn. That takes care of one worst case scenario, with a degree of political flexibility if the economy slows by 0.75 per cent or less. Far more fascinating is that the stability pact will work under non-expansionary conditions. If, as all the indications are, the fiscal fixes in Italy, France and Spain are as fragile as they appear, then the stability pact could be at work as early as the first year of Emu—1999.

IN THAT case it is possible to postulate a double whammy: the fines will not only put further fiscal pressure on the offending nations but they will also pile on the monetary pressure. The act of making special deposits with the European central bank will be the equivalent of a reserve requirement squeezing domestic credit in the countries concerned. This in itself ought to be a good reason for the political authorities, in the would-be member countries, to think extremely carefully before seeking to qualify by trickery.

In some respects, a union put together more slowly on convergence grounds rather than one artificially created and kept intact by the stability pact and other devices will be more durable, as David Lascelles outlines in his just released CSF paper which envisages an Emu implosion in 2003, as the weaker economies are forced into a downward spiral by the pact.

Yet being outside the euro area may well start to be a very odd position to be in. Given that much of the UK's trade is now with likely euro area nations, the waves of euro in commercial and personal transactions could eventually overwhelm sterling. There also is the risk that Britain could become the recipient of unmanageable currency inflows, which will make the sterling exchange rate even less competitive for UK exports than if we were inside Emu.

As far as the City of London is concerned, there is almost certainly as much benefit to be gained by being an offshore financial centre—as Britain has been for decades in the Eurobond and Eurodollar markets—as being at the centre. Although the efforts to exclude the out-countries from Target, the euro clearing system, could be more problematical than the Bank of England has conceded.

There are technical risks to Britain from being inside and outside the euro system. However, given the UK's economic roller coaster in the post-second world war period, the possibility of being part of a stable, less inflationary monetary system is seductive. Oddly enough, the realisation that the euro could provide the populist momentum for Emu which has been missing from the debate.

THE perception of the euro will be largely dependent on the economic structures built to support it. The first reaction from the foreign exchanges last night to the details of the stability pact—the mechanism designed to ensure fiscal discipline among member countries—was less than enthusiastic. The German mark weakened against the US dollar and gilt prices climbed, recognising the attractiveness of the UK as a likely out-courier, offering higher yields than those nations likely to be part of the first wave. However, such early reactions should not be taken too seriously.

It is worth remembering that when the stability pact

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"The Crash of 2003 by David Lascelles. Published by the CSF. (Tel: 0171-493-0173)

Granada media chief exits amid acrimony

lan King

DUNCAN Lewis, the former head of Mercury Communications, has quit his £280,000-a-year job as head of Granada's media division after a row with his boss, Charles Allen, it emerged last night.

Mr Lewis, who joined Granada only eight months ago, is expected to receive a substantial pay-off.

News of Mr Lewis's departure, which came after the stock market closed, stunned the City. It is the second time he has left a company after a matter of months in the job and following differences with colleagues.

Often described as "abrasive", Mr Lewis left Cable & Wireless in September 1995, after well-publicised disagreements with James Ross, the group's former chief executive.

Granada said Mr Lewis had left after he and the company "recognised an incompatibility of approach", and had agreed to "part on an amicable basis".

However, some City observers said Mr Lewis—who at 45 is some six years younger than Mr Allen—had never got on with his boss, and that the departure was no surprise.

One analyst said: "We always suspected that they didn't hit it off, and he was never even formally introduced to us in presentations." Meanwhile, Granada insid-

ers denied Mr Lewis's departure was due to recent criticism of the group's flagship television show, Coronation Street, or that it suggested there were any problems at Granada Sky Broadcasting, the group's new satellite TV operation.

Instead, they identified Mr Lewis's lack of experience in the television industry as a key reason for his departure.

One said: "He was an outsider in this industry, which is really a business quite unique from any other, and where creative, instinctive skills are at a premium."

"It soon became clear that the relationship was not working in a way in which it should do and, given that it is such an important role, it had to be resolved relatively quickly."

Granada has named Steve Morrison, chief operating officer of the media division, as Mr Lewis's replacement.

Mr Morrison, who has been with Granada since 1974, formerly worked alongside David Flawright, who was controversially ousted as head of Granada Television shortly after Granada's chairman, Gerry Robinson, became chief executive in 1991.

Announcing Mr Morrison's appointment, Mr Allen said: "During Steve's tenure as managing director, both Granada TV and LWT have dramatically improved their profitability, whilst enhancing their reputation for creative excellence."



Talking turkey... Peter Lawrence, chairman of chemical products company Lawrence, reported a 20 per cent jump in pre-tax profits yesterday to £985,000 after record trading. The effectiveness of the firm's animal feed products has paid dividends in the turkeys reared for the Christmas table at Tollgate Poultry Farm, near Warwick. PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE HILL

Wickes boss in line for failure fee if hard work doesn't pay

Roger Cowe

BILL Grimsey, the new chief executive of crippled DIY retailer Wickes, will receive a "failure fee" if the company's shares do not begin trading again in January.

Mr Grimsey's deal was revealed yesterday in the prospectus for the rights issue of shares, which should allow the share suspension, began in June, to be lifted.

It says: "If trading in the company's shares is not restored in January 1997, a compensation payment of £25,000 will be paid."

Wickes directors were not available last night to explain the reversal of the common "success fee" principle in corporate finance. A spokesman said Mr Grimsey had worked very hard on the recovery programme, and he and finance director Bill Hoskins had been awarded bonuses in recognition of that effort.

Mr Grimsey will get a one-off payment of £115,000 in recognition of the exceptional services he has provided to the group since July 1996, the prospectus says.

That sum will be doubled if, as is widely expected, the company is taken over by the end of August and Mr Grimsey leaves within a year after the takeover. Mr Hoskins will get a similar deal on his special payment of £100,000.

These payments are on top of salaries of £230,000 and £190,000 respectively, and options on shares worth three times those sums.

The prospectus also shows that two former non-executive directors, including former Marks & Spencer chief Lord Sless, receive pensions of £12,000 a year.

Ostrich farm investors have second chance to get the bird

Rupert Jones

A RESCUE plan was offered yesterday to people who invested millions of pounds in an ostrich-farming company which went into liquidation in April.

However, some investors may take fright when they realise it will mean them having to stump up more cash.

Around 2,700 people put nearly £22 million into the Ostrich Farming Corporation, which promised annual returns in excess of 50 per cent. After the firm ceased trading it was found that nearly a third of the ostriches sold to investors never existed.

Those people now have the chance to recoup losses by signing up with a UK-based company called Belatruche (UK), says a prospectus outlining the venture.

In return for their ostriches—being kept on farms in Belgium—and a cash outlay, investors will have a share in the company. People will have to pay a minimum of 13 per cent of their original investment. If they originally invested £20,000, that would mean £2,600.

The prospectus states that investors are being offered the opportunity to invest in a company with a holding in an existing ostrich farm.

Belgian farmer Eddy Nachtergaele, a director of the Belgian base of Belatruche, supplied the ostriches to OFC and they are still kept on his farms. The board includes three of the original OFC investors, who are also committee members of the Ostrich Owners Protection Group.

The share option must be raised at least £1.5 million by January 10 for the rescue to go ahead. If the capital is not raised, Mr Nachtergaele will repossess the existing birds to recover fees he has incurred.

Lang gives Northern Electric's US predator the green light

Chris Barrie

THE Government cleared the way for another round of takeovers and mergers among the privatised utilities yesterday when Industry Secretary Ian Lang waved through a £782 million bid for Northern Electric.

As the Newcastle-based regional electricity company and US predator CE Electric clashed over the terms of the offer, shares rose sharply in London Electricity, Yorkshire Electricity and Southern Electric in the expectation that further bids could be in the offing. The trio are the only Recs of the 12 originally privatised still independent and not subject to a bid.

Traders also marked up Northern's licence so that its credit rating had to be maintained at investment grade status, effectively preventing the US firm from allowing the British company's finances to deteriorate too severely.

CE Electric and its owners—the Nebraska-based utility CalEnergy and construction firm Peter Kiewit Sons—have also agreed to supply Prof Littlechild with financial information on Northern.

Northern chairman David Morris welcomed Mr Lang's decision and said the bid would now be fought on its merits. Rejecting CE Electric's offer as inadequate, he said shareholders were being asked to give up almost £1 per share in dividends over the

next nine months. Northern shares rose 42.5p to 645p, below the 650p cash offer from CE Electric, as traders weighed the likelihood of the bid succeeding. Northern is to lobby big City shareholders and the local shareholders up to the offer deadline of next Friday.

The Prudential confirmed last night that it believed the CE Electric offer undervalued Northern. An executive said £50p a share did not reflect an adequate premium. But with close to a third of shareholders having already accepted the offer, CE Electric chairman David Sokol said Northern had been unable to find a "white knight" and the offer represented a "very full price".

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Greece splashes tax dodgers on the front page

Helena Smith in Athens

HELL hath no fury like the wronged taxman and 481 tax evaders have quickly discovered this in Greece. After setting up a crime division and employing gunboats to hunt down smart smugglers, the governing socialists in Athens have now devised a new way to crack down on the national sport.

"If you can't nab them, shame them," proclaimed Papantoniou. So every Greek newspaper carried names and addresses of the culprits yesterday, running some on the front page.

Among those listed were a famous basketball coach, a prominent courtier, olive oil merchants, nightclub barons and even state-owned banks.

It has not taken long for any of the offenders to deny the crime. Protests aside, however, the European Union's poorest member state has been quick to slap heavy fines on all of its "cherished" names.

The penalties, as Mr Papantoniou points out, amount to 250 billion drachmas, the sum the government hopes to raise in with its newly announced abolition of tax breaks. The fines imposed on the ten biggest names amount to 80 billion drachmas.

Greeks are among the

world's most skilful tax dodgers, claiming that 500 years of Ottoman rule taught them the tricks of the trade. Since the 1980s tax collectors say they have battled to stamp out a thriving black market believed to rob the state of almost 40 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

The government's antiquated fiscal system (computers have just begun to be installed in tax offices) and rampant corruption have been blamed for the scale of the national sport.

The socialists have already voted to ensure that the method is not only on the statute books but enforced by law.

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- Top Ten fines**
1. Eliotiopi Trader: Dr27.7 bn
 2. Dimitris Karamanlis Olive oil merchant: Dr15.5 bn
 3. Yiannis Panagiotakis Film company: Dr7 bn
 4. Greek Olive Oils: Dr6.8 bn
 5. ETEA Leasing: Dr5.7 bn
 6. Polyvios Chrysiakos Olive oil refinery: Dr5.5 bn
 7. Hellenic Centre Clothing: Dr4 bn
 8. Evangelos Tygiades Electronic goods: Dr3.7 bn
 9. Arifidis Olive oil marketing: Dr3.5 bn
 10. Theodoros Karatas Construction: Dr3.1 bn

News in brief

Ladbroke sells hotel

Ladbroke Group said yesterday it had sold the 400-bedroom Washington Vista Hotel for £47 million (£28.5 million) to US group Interstate Hotels.

The group also announced it had reached an out-of-court settlement in a long-running rent dispute with the landlords of the Paris Hilton. As a result, Ladbroke will take an exceptional charge of £18 million into its 1996 accounts.

Chairman leaves

British Building, the materials group, yesterday said its non-executive chairman, Dr Robert Payne, was leaving the company due to "irreconcilable differences" between him and the other directors.

BP in Columbia

BP is planning to invest around \$600 million (£362 million) in Columbia next year, the group said yesterday, matching its investment in the country in 1996. BP has now invested some £1.2 billion in Columbia.

Caledonia stakes sale

Caledonia Investments has sold its 44 per cent stake in Bristol Helicopters to Offshore Logistics for around £49.7 million. As part of the deal, Caledonia will take 6 per cent of Offshore, and will get a 49 per cent stake in Bristol Holdings, the new company formed to buy Bristol.

TOURIST RATES — BANK BELLS

Australia 2.02	France 8.38	Italy 2.480	Singapore 2.28
Austria 17.47	Germany 2.48	Malta 0.5790	South Africa 7.84
Belgium 81.18	Greece 388.00	Netherlands 2.79	Spain 208.00
Canada 2.19	Hong Kong 12.50	New Zealand 2.2800	Sweden 11.11
Cyprus 0.7825	India 69.50	Norway 10.46	Switzerland 2.11
Denmark 8.56	Ireland 0.896	Portugal 252.10	Turkey 168,489
Finland 7.58	Israel 5.44	Saudi Arabia 8.17	USA 1.62

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

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Finance Guardian

Japan isn't working any more

The land of the sinking yen is in economic crisis. Jobs-for-life are being replaced by hire-and-fire. **KEITH HARPER** in Tokyo asks what's going wrong



Pondering an uncertain future... Will these young Japanese have to join the ranks of the unemployed? PHOTOGRAPH BY BERNARD ANNEBROUKE

JAPAN'S emergence as an economic superpower, second only to the United States, had been — until the 1990s — one of this century's most dramatic changes in the global pecking order. But as the yen soared to new heights against the dollar at the start of this decade, the cracks in Japan's industrial, political and financial structures began to emerge. Japanese products, which in the 1970s and 1980s were the best made and most price-competitive in the world, lost their lustre. Like the multinationals in Europe and North America, the great trading houses were forced to move production offshore to their more competitive neighbours in the Pacific Basin, Britain and North America.

With the hollowing out of the industrial base came a financial implosion. The supervision and management of Japanese banks was shown to be deeply flawed, leading to a loss of confidence which made the Nikkei, the star stock market index of the 1980s, a legend which almost totally melted out on the raging bull market that has taken New York and the European bourses to the highest levels in their history. The completion of the Uruguay trade round — designed to open Japanese markets — and the decision by the seven

strongest economic powers to devalue the yen against the dollar brought about long-awaited relief. There was a belief that Japan could halt the economic decline, lack of initiative and dynamism which kept it in recession during much of the present decade. At the start of 1996 it looked as if the sleeping giant would be aroused from its slumber. The International Monetary Fund, perhaps more in hope than expectation, predicted that recovery would gain momentum after the protracted downturn. The deflationary forces which had crushed asset prices and optimism were in retreat. For a few months the West breathed again: growth in Japan would counteract the slowdowns expected in the US after a prolonged expansion and in Europe as it adjusted to monetary union. However, as the year draws to a close, there is growing evidence that a longer-term cultural, political and economic malaise may see Japan left behind by its flourishing Pacific neighbours. Consumer spending, which accounts for 60 per cent of the economy, dropped last month by 4.6 per cent — one of the biggest monthly falls on record. Government officials, wishing to make light of the drop, cite the adverse impact of a cool summer and an outbreak of food poisoning on

retail and restaurant sales. But consumers have kept their wallets shut for years. None of the traditional remedies has fixed the economic mess. Government spending programmes lavished billions of yen on public works, the Ministry of Finance engineered a currency depreciation to relieve hard-pressed exporters and the Bank of Japan brought interest rates to record lows. While Japan's most important multinationals have shown signs of recovery, the domestic economy is stuck. Over the past quarter, it has grown by 0.1 per cent. Next year, the Nomura research institute estimates, Japan's GDP will improve by little more than 1 per cent. Enter Professor Hiroshi Takeuchi, chairman of Japan's

long-term credit bank research institute and a top government adviser. He is leading a task group to investigate ways of encouraging tourism on a grand scale, bringing in not just the Koreans and Taiwanese, but Americans and Europeans and, although it almost hurts him to say it of Japan's natural enemy, the Chinese. **I**N PROF Takeuchi's Asian utopia, hotels will have discount rates, noodles will be £1 a bowl, and road signs will give equal prominence to English and Korean. A Universal Studios, supposedly larger than the original film lot in Los Angeles, is being built, and there could be a place for a second Disneyland and what the Profes-

or brightly describes as "other traditional cultures". These Western-style leisure pursuits will be augmented by local festivals, improved use of Tokyo's nine symphony orchestras, and division of the capital into well-signposted tourist zones. To launch the initiative, Prof Takeuchi intends to tap the latent talent of thousands of Japanese wives who have toured overseas with their husbands. They will take charge of a vast network of new information centres in every town and city. As Prof Takeuchi contemplates this upheaval in Japanese culture, he also ponders what life could be like if his country does not take this leap into the unknown. The yen continues to float against the dollar and in the long

term, he believes, the rate will decline to 150 or even more. Into this uncertain pot, he stirs the drift away from Japanese factories to parts of Asia where labour is cheaper — and to Britain. Some 10 per cent of Japan's production is now outside the country and the gap is widening. Five years ago Japan was producing 13 million cars a year. That figure is down to nine million and the productivity of workers at Nissan's plant at Washington, County Durham, has more than matched that of Japan's best. All this could set the stage for a long-awaited showdown between opposing forces in the political establishment. Since his re-election, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has undertaken a broad reform of Japan's heavily-reg-

ulated economy. A successful deregulation programme which began this month, targeting 13 different areas, may lead to new growth and produce lower prices for both consumers and companies. But it will be tough to persuade the bureaucrats to dismantle the well-tried system of shielded domestic markets, inflated prices at home and strong exports. If the civil servants hold sway, the productive planning that for so long has dominated Japan's domestic economy could lead to its long-term decline. Mr Hashimoto has to act. Unless he takes a knife to Japan's excessive living and wage costs, consumer demand will lag and firms will search for cheaper accommodation abroad. A recent survey by the Nippon research institute revealed that 55 per cent feared they or a family member would be unemployed within a year. Unemployment, at 3.4 per cent, is low by Western standards, but the prospect of substantial layoffs if stagnation continues is being talked about openly. Dreaded short-term contracts are replacing the jobs-for-life philosophy that has been the lynchpin of Japan's post-war recovery. Companies are rejigging their labour forces to cut costs and make them more adaptable. Core jobs are maintained, but industry is pushing older work-

A DECISION to break up the Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation is a spur competition in the office and the Cabinet is drawing up a much broader package to revitalise wholesale, retail, housing and transportation markets in the new year. It will be a slow process, because the Japanese are a conservative people, but nothing else has worked. The days of Japan's double-digit growth are gone. They belong now to Asia's newest tigers, such as Korea and Vietnam, and nobody has seen the beginnings of the best of China. Japan's twin policy of financial reform and deregulation and the opening of its frontiers to streams of visitors may work. But Japan will have to countenance a swifter change than it has so far been ready to concede; otherwise the more confident tigers will take over her lair.

Fly me, I work for half pay. Smiles are obligatory

TISHIN Shigeta is a new breed Japanese worker in a country where the jobs-for-life ethos has been shattered by recession, writes Keith Harper. Miss Shigeta is an air hostess on a year's contract with All Nippon Airways and is being paid only 50 per cent of staff rates. If she impresses she will be taken on permanently.

Her arrival at the company is a reflection of its policy to cut costs by 15 per cent over three years. The in-house union raised no objection to the plan because the move protected the jobs of people at the company, even though some of them took voluntary redundancy. Miss Shigeta says that while there is no guarantee she will be allowed to stay,

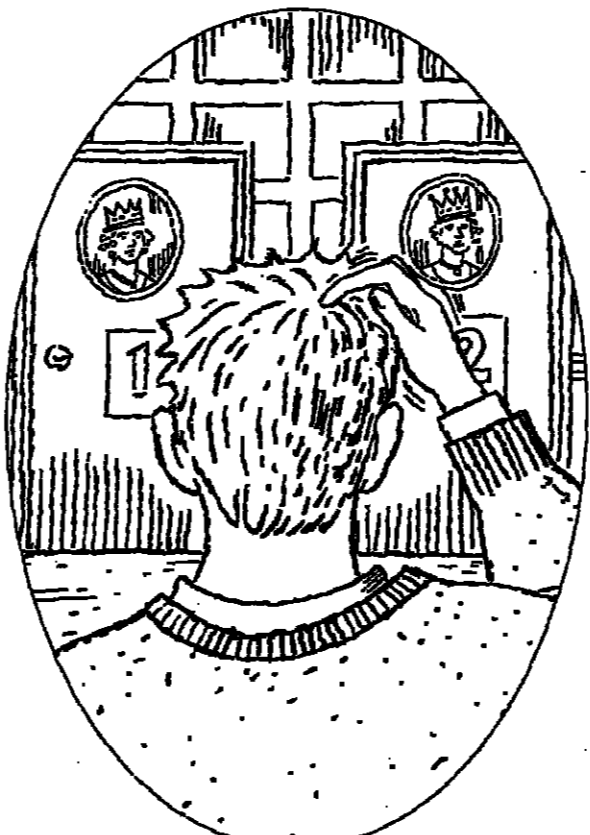
she enjoys the job. She is highly qualified, went to university and the opportunity could lead to better things. She has friends who travel two hours each way into Tokyo for work every day and are exhausted. She lives close to Haneda airport, but conditions are cramped in the two-roomed flat she shares with her family in a Tokyo suburb.

"The rent is big and to buy an apartment is not possible. It is too much." Her father, thought he had a job for life in his company. Then he was asked to take early retirement, and died soon afterwards. Tishin feels confident she will survive at ANA. "It's a very happy company and a smile is part of our training." But she agrees that the low pay bothers her.

Ruddles County Riddles.

No. 13. Pub Challenge.

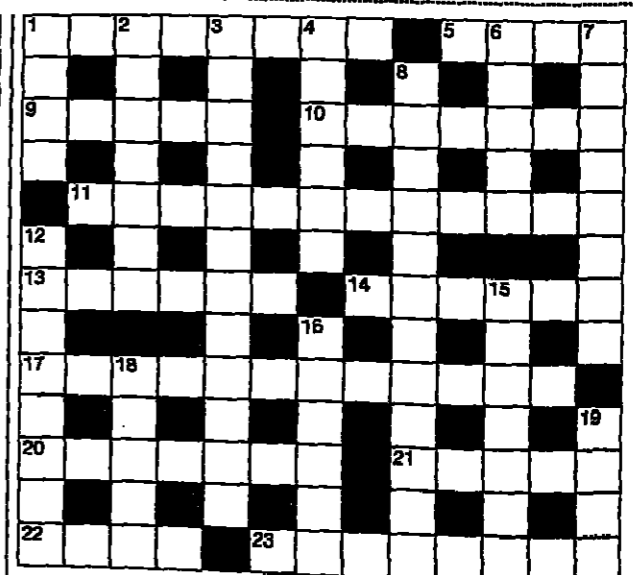
For Peter Barasworthy it was a dream come true. He had won the 1996 Hertfordshire Pub Quiz Championship after six grueling rounds. But his victory was by no means final. He had yet to claim the prize. He was placed in the bar of the Queen's Head Pub in Westcott. There were two doors, each leading to different rooms. Behind one of the doors, lay the prize, a voucher for unlimited access to the love of his life — Ruddles County. The challenge was set. He did not know behind which door (they were marked 1 and 2) lay which prize. Beside each door stood a barman to help him decide which door to choose. However, the catch was that one of the barmen had been instructed to lie, but Peter did not know which. Peter stepped forward, asked one of the men a question, and upon hearing his answer confidently strode through door 1 to claim his voucher. Peter is of course too busy to tell us how he worked out which door to choose. Do you know how he worked it out?



Quick Crossword No. 8309

STAGE COACH
P T O A R C H
L E A P L E T S T E A M
A I E O V R O
C A R T B U N A C O U T
K P Y G O
R A P P E D U L T E R
R I C K S H A W D R A Y
I K P R I E O
A L I F I M I O F U L
S H A C E E
W H E E L C H A I R

Solution No. 8308



Across

- 1 Tapid (6)
- 5 Prima donna (4)
- 9 Argentine dance (5)
- 10 Strong paper (7)
- 11 Study of triangles, angles (12)
- 13 Curiosity, strange object (6)
- 14 Russian plain (6)
- 17 Running of a household (12)
- 20 Dirty (7)
- 21 Outdo (5)
- 22 Get rid of — a hut (4)

Down

- 1 Tardy (4)
- 2 Associated — relations (7)
- 3 Daydreamer (4,8)
- 4 Awake memories of (6)
- 6 Creek (5)
- 7 Minutely examined (8)
- 8 Use of words whose sound suggests the sense (12)
- 12 Riding breaches (8)
- 18 Cure-all (7)

- 23 N American Indian axe (8)
- 16 Penthouse, shed beside a wall (4-2)
- 18 Male relative (5)
- 19 Anti-aircraft fire (4)

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Saturday December 14 1996

The Guardian the week

It was shattering news. One of the American team sent by President Clinton to negotiate a peace had been sleeping with Britain's enemy, a member of the political wing of the IRA. It was an awful day for peace; a great day for headlines such as "Sex Scandal Perils Peace Talks". But this "Dangerous Liaison" was a fiction. **Roy Greenslade** on how lies flourish in a climate of hate

Kiss and tell lies



No truth about their tryst... only in the imaginations of Ian Paisley and a few journalists were Gerard Kelly (left) and Martha Pope (below) lovers. But why let the truth spoil a good scandal? PHOTOGRAPHS: FACEMAKER

A T WAS a story which would send tremors around those capitals of the western world which were anxiously monitoring the testering peace process in Northern Ireland. "Dangerous Liaison", belted the front page headline in the Mail on Sunday. The subheading told the tale: "Major warned by MI5 of link between top IRA man and US peace negotiator."

The Mail on Sunday's story could not have been more explicit. It claimed that both Clinton and John Major, the FBI and Patrick Mayhew had all been told by MI5 that Mitchell's deputy, Martha Pope, had been having an affair with a senior member of Sinn Fein, Gerard Kelly. Pope was chairing the Talks Support Team, working with her long-time colleague Mitchell. Kelly was jailed in 1973 for his part in the Old Bailey bomb. Imprisoned in the Maze, he escaped in 1983 and spent four years on the run before being extradited from Holland. Freed in 1989, he is now one of Sinn Fein's most senior members and was elected earlier this year in the elections devised by Mitchell as a way round the decommissioning deadlock. He would be a Sinn Fein delegate to the peace talks, if and when the party is ever included. The MI5 report, said the Mail on Sunday, had details of secret meetings between the 51-year-old American diplomat and Kelly, 42, who had been writing romantic poetry for her. It was accompanied by a call from the DUP leader, Ian Paisley, for Pope to be sacked. There was only one problem

with the story: it was completely and utterly untrue. But this is not a familiar story about the sort of journalistic self-delusion which spawns giant cock-ups. Instead this is a story about the extraordinarily perverse world of Northern Ireland politics. This is one of the few occasions when some kind of spotlight can be trained on the casual dirty trickery which passes for political discourse in those benighted Six Counties. Why did the Mail on Sunday publish a totally false story? What convinced a seasoned reporter and an experienced editor to risk running an exclusive which was, and this is a well-chosen euphemism, bunkum? Every material "fact" was wrong and, by extension, every innuendo. The Mail on Sunday story of December 1 — bylined by the crime reporter Chester Stern — told how the MI5 secrets were revealed to the Democratic Unionist Party conference by Mr Paisley, who told them: "People in Senator Mitchell's office are not to be trusted for they're friends of the IRA." Paisley's deputy, Peter Robinson, evidently told the paper his

party had raised the matter with Mayhew and the Prime Minister. There were no quotes from either Pope or Kelly. Mayhew was quoted and, in the latest edition, there was a statement from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO), the form and content of which are the centre of the controversy. The Mail on Sunday was not alone in breaking the story. The brash Dublin-based tabloid, the Sunday World, ran a variant which alleged that Kelly set out on a failed mission to seduce Pope. The ailing Express on Sunday, which has lost hundreds of thousands of readers to the Mail on Sunday in recent years, could not bear being scooped by its rival. So it made the classic mistake of lifting the story for its later editions. In a swift rewrite, it repeated the salacious details. Newspaper stories move quickly. Agency reports were soon appearing on computer screens in papers around the globe. By coincidence, the Washington correspondent of the New York Post, Deborah Orrin, read the Mail on Sunday at Heathrow Airport on her way to a riding holiday in Ireland. She saw it as damaging to Clinton, which fitted page 14

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the week that was

Us on us

The British view
If he [David Willetts] really had been a man of honour he would have resigned...

time to stop messing about. He signed a contract which earns him a reputed £15,000 a week to play for Middlesbrough...

Them on them

The global view
Members of the crowd recalled how 36 years ago they saw 69 of their relatives and friends being silenced with guns...

nursing homes, crops, cars and the local hospital. A resident said of the storm with hail the size of cricket balls...



THEME OF THE WEEK SKELETONS IN CUPBOARDS

It WAS a week characterised by the skeleton in the cupboard and, naturally, it was in politics...

known in the Tory hierarchy by the fictitious name of Two Brains until his skeleton fell out of his hideaway...

crashed out late in the week, when it emerged in an interview in the Spectator that the popstar, previously assumed to be broadly in favour of monetary union...

But perhaps the greatest cupboard opening of the week was down to Richard Addis, the one-time novice monk, now editor of the Express newspaper...

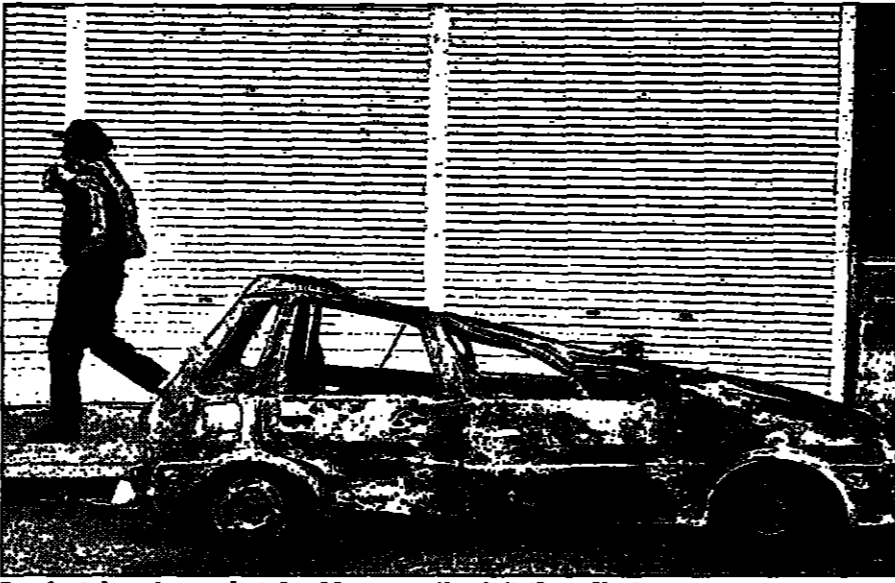
HAVE YOU BEEN PAYING ATTENTION

- 1. "His hair's all right but we don't agree with his tax policies." Who won't be voting for Tony Blair?
2. "When push comes to shove, the pounds, dollars and deutschemarks can't be equal..."

Streets where innocence is no defence

This week last year December 13, 1995

There ad in Loot said flat-share in Clapham North. I only found out after signing the lease that our front door was technically in Brixton...



London's burning... but should you mention it to the police? PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM JONES

smelled my hands for petrol and talked of Molotov cocktails. He pointed to a small pile of stuff around the corner and asked me what it was...

stealing it from the car. After I explained who I was, he crossed the street and a second cop came by...

me that signing for ill-gotten items wouldn't hurt my case. I politely refused and when he asked again in March I refused a second time...

Kiss and tell lies

page 13 of the paper's agenda, and filed her own version which repeated all the allegations by attributing them to a London newspaper...

paranoia. It is a politics informed by suspicion and bad faith, misunderstanding and prejudice, half-truths and downright lies...

too delighted to pick up the story merely because it was blue on Saturday November 30, the Mail on Sunday's Stern called him. He had realised that he and Jordan were working on the same story...

Headlines to sink all hopes of peace... all part of the tangled web of fear and suspicion that rules in Northern Ireland

forum, of Mitchell's reply and of the radio broadcast by Birney Stern, and his editor Jonathan Holborow, read Mayhem's quote as a kind of nod and wink that the story might be true...

politics. "She's been around the track," she said. "She knows politics isn't for clisses but this kind of stuff takes it to a whole new level..."

Quiz answers
1. Geri, Mel B, Mel C, Victoria and Emma.
2. The Spice Girls, according to an in-depth political interview in the Spectator.

It was, by any standards, a spectacular mistake. So where did the fault lie? There is little doubt of the Mail on Sunday's journalistic guilt, which it has readily admitted.

But we have to imagine that both Jordan and Stern knew nothing of the allegations in the

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But we have to imagine that both Jordan and Stern knew nothing of the allegations in the

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How Josh Astor, a man with two famous fathers, became a tabloid playboy-junkie sensation

A star-crossed Astor

THE JOANNA COLES INTERVIEW

PLAYBOY, yeah. Right. Oh the press have stuck all sorts of labels on my forehead. Playboy-Junkie... Junkie-Aristo, blah, blah, blah," mutters Josh Astor, struggling out of a battered White Ford Fiesta.

It's the morning after the night before, which saw the official opening of the Cobden Club, London's newest media hangout in west London, and Astor's latest business venture. A slight figure in ripped jeans, geriatric leather jacket, pink pyjama-style shirt decorated by a cigarette burn and two large stains (one coffee, the other paint), it's impossible to reconcile him with his "society playboy" image and wild-child antics which kept the News of the World and the Sun in business for much of the 1990s.

In tow is Daisy Temple, a pretty flatmate drowning in a vast fisherman's jumper, and brought for protection against the press. Courtesy of squawk good looks, money, a famous surname and famous father (in this case the two are not the same) Astor has had enough newspaper maulings to last him a lifetime. It's not hard to see why. Tossed out of Eton for smoking dope, jailed for possessing cocaine, you'd be pushed to invent a better tabloid target. And yet there's more.

Throw in the fact that he's not really the son of Michael Astor (Nancy Astor's youngest son) who brought him up, but the illegitimate son of Jpe "Gannex" Kagan, a key and notorious member of Harold Wilson's entourage, and you have enough character and plot for an entire series of novels by Jay McInerney.

"If they said I sodomised horses I'd laugh now," Astor continues, lighting the first of many Marlboros. "I don't really care, well I did care at first, but after you've been called every name under the sun it's somehow rather liberating. It's a bit like those kids' games where you put the right peg in the right slot. They find a slot, you're a randy vicar or a playboy junkie. Well I wasn't the former."

We'll come back to the drugs in a minute, but above us two beautiful brass chandeliers are swaying gently, their motion caught in a huge mirror. Outside there's a teasing scent of alcohol, the cleaner is buffing wildly with an industrial vacuum cleaner, and a beautiful waitress spirals in a tray of black coffee in stark white cups. Even though it's blizzard, no snow, I feel as if I may soon develop a hangover—it's that kind of club.

Kate Moss, Rifat Ozbek, the Enllys Lloyd and Mortimer and Will Self are on the membership committee. Last week Bryan Ferry, Patsy Kensit and Lord Snowdon turned up for the Vogue members paid their annual fee upfront before the doors were even opened. (Membership now costs around £300 and the list is temporarily closed.)

In a corner of the private dining room there's an ice bucket with an expectant bottle from the previous evening. "Ah, Pinot Grigio," cries Astor, seizing the dripping wine and offering it round. The manager puts his head round the door to demand a chat about the door and a golden suddenly emerges from under the table and silently wanders off.

Before I probe any further, I figure we should finish with his first of the press. What was the worst encounter?

"Well it was quite annoying outside court. One paper follows you around hassling you, telling you that you want to sell your story, you have a brief conversation telling them to piss off and have a nice day. The following morning you read that that constitutes 'striking deals for your story'.



Josh Astor... I don't really care; after you've been called every name under the sun it's liberating. You're a randy vicar or a playboy junkie. Well I wasn't the former. PHOTOGRAPH: EAMONN McCABE

Frankly, the suggestion that you'd take their money is more offensive than any combination of junkie vicar, randy playboy."

The court in question was Southwark Crown, where Astor was charged with possession of cocaine. He was 21, it was his first offence and he was sent down for three months. Was he shocked?

"I knew I was going to go to prison," he grins weakly. Can he remember being sentenced? "I waited 10 hours, then the jury couldn't reach a verdict on whether they'd reached a verdict. Eventually they did. Guilty. "By the time I got the verdict I was being sitting around being hassled, with the Sunday Mirror shouting 'Come on, we'll give you £5,000.'"

Was he scared? "No, not at all. What's there to be scared of? You mean being confined?"

No. I say, thinking of Lord Brocklet's recent experience at the hands of a gang armed with razors, scared of being beaten up?

"Why would they want to beat me up? Well, you must have been very different from the average prisoner. "Most of the violence is done by the officers. You just switch off really. It's very boring, you shut down your brain, you just sit around and read books. Actually, it's quite relaxing. I was in a quite happy mood. I was only sentenced to three months and I

'I was a child of the state,' he laughs spikily, 'so really, when I went to prison, I was just going home.'

thought I'd get six." Was he worried he might be raped? "No, I didn't see any of that, but it's to do with self-confidence isn't it? There were one or two people who had a few problems, but they were very, very nervous and they advertised themselves as targets. It's very like school, except everyone's grown up so it's less vicious because everyone's got to get on with everyone else."

At the time he was accused of taking his famous surname to new lows. Do its associations weigh heavily? He refuses to say. What about his family? What do they think? "It worried my mother [the former fashion journalist Judy Innes] as to how it all affected me, but it didn't really affect me."

Josh was adopted by Michael Astor, the author and former Tory MP when he was three. But a custody battle ensued and, though he was brought up at the Astor home in Oxford, he was technically a ward of the Official Solicitor.

"I was a child of the state," he laughs spikily, "so really, when I went to prison, I was just going home."

Though he knew the identity of his real father, he had no personal contact from the age of two until he was 19.

In the intervening years, Kagan's fortunes rose and fell. His textile business flourished, earning him a life peerage in Wilson's

infamous 1976 Lavender List, but he was always surrounded by foggy rumours of KGB connections. Then in 1980, when Josh was 14, Kagan was charged with theft and false accounting and sent to jail for seven months.

"It was a farce," Astor recalls, when Kagan did eventually make contact. "I was lying in bed with a girlfriend when there was a knock on the door and this guy appeared. He was an executive at the Daily Mirror, I don't know what hold my father had on him, anyway, he dressed like John Major and spoke as if he'd come out of a Jane Austen novel."

"He said 'I have come on a matter of not inconsiderable delicacy'. I was like what? My girlfriend was there, and he kept looking at her and saying 'some delicacy'. Finally I said: 'Well spit it out then.' So he said: 'I've got a message from your father.'"

"My girlfriend didn't know anything about my father, and asked if he usually communicated like this. The message was that he wanted to meet me. Then the man from the Mirror went into this whole spiel about how he'd been adopted when he was a boy... I kept saying: 'Yes, tell him I'll meet him, tell him yes.'"

Does he remember the first meeting? "It was strange because I didn't remember him at all. It was like meeting someone for the first

time. He was always rather melodramatic, he wanted to give it a rather luminous ambience and I found all that a bit tiresome."

Did he feel it resembled Kagan? "No, he was 75 by that time."

Did he like him, did he feel a connection? "Yes, I could see a connection, bits of him in me."

Which bits? "I can't... well... some sort of sense of humour." Did he think it curious that they both ended up doing short stretches in jail? "We never spoke about it. I did ask him about it once and he stonewalled."

Why does he think Kagan called him? "Was he motivated by guilt? It's hard to say," Astor says tactfully. "He had three other children, they all knew about me so there was no awkwardness. I think he was slightly seeking after what was lost. Maybe he worried more about what he didn't have, than what he did."

Despite his image, I am surprised to find that Astor seems remarkably well-adjusted. He recounts the odder parts of his life with good humour and worries constantly that he might be upsetting other people. I wonder if he was conscious of his absent father as he grew up? He shrugs: "No, one father goes, another comes. Realising how hard this sounds, he adds quickly: "It's very common now."

But that doesn't mean it isn't

traumatic. And there must have been more trauma when Josh was 13 and Michael Astor died. "I think it would have been quite awkward to have them both around at the same time, you know. It would have been a conflict of loyalties."

"I had another father, then he died, then the other one made contact. They were serial, consecutive."

After a hesitant start, Astor, the chief investor, looks oddly at home in the Cobden Club. A groovy combination of library (members are invited to contribute a copy of each book they've written), restaurant and vast bar with theatre space, its main attraction is that you can drink until 1.30am. But why a membership club? "Well, I think people like the idea of going somewhere where they don't have to arrange to meet someone, somewhere they can have a drink in a civilised atmosphere, and where they can pop in for half an hour if they're in the area."

It's familiarity. People don't speak to each other on tube trains, everyone's anonymous, the more people there are in a city, the more isolated you become."

And besides, he adds, heading off to a lecture for the degree in humanities, he's now reading at London University: "I have a one point plan to save the country. Abolish the licensing laws."

JEREMY HARDY



I blame the absent fathers, myself

IT WAS announced this week that the practice of paying sperm donors is to end. It is always worth listening to news stories about semen to hear what euphemisms are used in order to maintain the tone of British broadcasting.

When the ban on British beef began, newscasters were given the task of informing us that ministers were trying to negotiate an exemption for three beef products: gelatine, tallow and semen. Initially, viewers and listeners were left trying to imagine what kind of frightful continental dish would require those ingredients. Then it became apparent that the semen was for purposes of artificial insemination.

After a few days, someone must have decided that the nation's morality was at risk from the mention of generative fluid. So the term "by-product" was substituted. This was clearly an unsatisfactory avoidance of the issue, so, as a compromise, news editors settled on the qualified term, "bull

semen". This ended confusion and distinguished it from cow semen. No lessons have been learned from that unhappy episode. On Tuesday night, we were treated to a BBC report about human "genetic material". I am sure that if the young students who provide the genetic material thought of it in those terms they would be unable to accomplish the donation.

The serious question in all this is whether it is right to be paid for being a sperm donor. The obvious answer is that if Richard Littlejohn gets paid for being what he is, then why shouldn't a student? But the relevant regulatory authority, Ofcom, decided it was unethical. It is not difficult to see why. The analogy of blood-donation was mentioned. No one really knows how much infected blood was sold by junkies around the world before AIDS became widespread, or how many of the world's poor have bled themselves dry so they can buy food for their children.

True, sperm is carefully screened, and donors who overdo it risk no more than a little soreness; but the taint of money remains. All decent people fundamentally believe that there should be no place for profit in matters of health.

The dilemma is that, without a financial incentive, most sperm donors won't bother. This is not so surprising. After all, drug companies won't just give medical supplies to the Health Service: they want money for them, and a lot more than is paid out to hard-up male students. It is preferable that, in time, more men are persuaded to give the gift of life freely; and that students are able to study, without having to do all manner of things to make ends meet. But in the short term, Britain needs sperm, and it seems that the only way to obtain it is to bug young men a few quid.

To many people trying for a child, donated sperm is a very simple and effective answer to a fertility problem. It also makes parenthood possible for women who are not heterosexual. Various absurd objections have been

raised against lesbian motherhood. Most of them involve the notion that children will be damaged by the experience. I should have thought there were many advantages to being a child with two

Michael Portillo's father fought against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, and yet reared an evil little Tory

mums. For one thing, you'd be nicely turned out in the morning, although you might be late for school trying to run a gauntlet of palms and saliva as your mothers' indignant partings on each side of your head.

positive male role model" does not stand up to much scrutiny. Most children barely see their fathers. And even the most splendid role-model is no guarantee of anything. Michael Portillo's father fought against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, and yet somehow managed to rear an evil little Tory scumbag.

Many people object to lesbians and unconventional families on the grounds that they are "unnatural". The same vague prejudice clouds the whole discussion of fertility treatment. Ever since the term "test-tube baby" was coined, people have fantasised about some sci-fi nightmare going on in our hospitals.

I think there are some who believe babies are actually being born in laboratories, even though this only happens in hospitals with acute bed shortages.

entirely misplaced, and is encouraged by herbal nihilists who seek to drag humanity back to pre-technological times when, if there was anything at all wrong with us, we just died.

But in the way the fertilisation regulators are discussing sperm there exists a grave and pious attitude to its donation. They want donors to take a more serious attitude to the task in hand. They suspect those students of being frivolous and irresponsible.

I know there is a movement to re-establish the notion that we are genetically predetermined, but I don't think the recipients of students' semen should really fret that a child will have an over-developed need to store traffic cones in its room.

Readers may remember my outlining the controversial conviction of Danny McNamee for alleged IRA activities. If you would like to send Danny a Christmas card, write to him at HM Prison, Sutton, Stamford Bridge, York, YO1 4PS.



White faces, red ribbons and true blue party tactics

SUNDAY: The Albert Hall was packed for a concert by Jools Holland and his Rhythm 'n' Blues Orchestra...

MONDAY: At a Christmas party, I met a young woman who told me about how she had pursued this year, unsuccessfully...

TUESDAY: I hear that Dennis Turner, a whip, did a brilliant stand-up turn at a Labour Christmas dinner...

WEDNESDAY: The argument about TV violence and crime is dragged out yet again. I consulted my colleague Duncan Campbell...

THURSDAY: Dozens of letters have piled up about Aids ribbons, many helpful, some full of hysterical charges of bigotry...

New Labour sees the voters, and even its own MPs, as statistics to be massaged and pushed around

FRIDAY: "Blair's just a marketing man with no ideas," said Spice Girl Geri (the one who appears nude in the current Club magazine) during the girls' seminal interview on politics printed in today's Spectator...

FRIDAY: "Blair's just a marketing man with no ideas," said Spice Girl Geri (the one who appears nude in the current Club magazine) during the girls' seminal interview on politics printed in today's Spectator...

have much more effect in improving matters. I have cooked plenty of meals without meat which I felt were fine, but have no wish to be restricted to meatless meals...

Dear Shaun, DIDN'T anyone ever tell you that poverty, deprivation and the abuse of animals are linked, and if you want me to spell it out to you I will read this slowly and let it sink in G-R-E-E-D...

Dear Margi, YOUR reasons for turning vegetarian do you credit but do not stand up to any real scrutiny. There are disgraceful practices in the meat industry and people collude in the ill-treatment of animals by turning a blind eye to the realities of battery farming...

Dear Mr Beefeater, I LOATHE the thought of killing innocent animals who have never done us any harm just to appease my belly and my tongue. The concept of simply spending more on buying "organically" reared animals is, at best, naive...

Dear Margi, IT FASCINATES me that you feel you must couple the fight against world poverty and inner-city deprivation with vegetarianism. The two are obviously linked in your mind more than mine...

Dear Margi, I MENTIONED that my main problem with vegetarians is the high moral tone they often adopt. And, as a cook, I have trouble with the food eaten by such paragons, rather than the principle of not eating meat...

Dear Margi, I MENTIONED that my main problem with vegetarians is the high moral tone they often adopt. And, as a cook, I have trouble with the food eaten by such paragons, rather than the principle of not eating meat...

Flesh and the devil



Eleven dead from E. Coli, not to mention BSE. Who'd eat meat? No one should, it's cruel, says actress Margi Clarke. Oh lighten up, chef Shaun Hill retorts. Organic meat is humane — and tastier than veggy stodge

Dear Mr Beefeater, MY REASONS for giving up meat are numerous, though the building of a more compassionate world is the foundation of my vegetarianism. Deregulation of the farming industry has taken away much-needed safety controls and good practice — copying the attitude displayed everywhere else when industry goes for the gold rush...

Dear Margi, YOUR reasons for turning vegetarian do you credit but do not stand up to any real scrutiny. There are disgraceful practices in the meat industry and people collude in the ill-treatment of animals by turning a blind eye to the realities of battery farming...



Advertisement for 'New Internationalist magazine' with the headline 'Keeping an eye on the world' and details about a free trial subscription.

Doonesbury comic strip by Garry Trudeau, featuring characters in a car and dialogue about a 'gorgeous, young, perfect size six girl friend'.



EUROPE the debate of the 'century or isn't it?' The Times keeps saying it is, so I turned eagerly to its pages yesterday to discover what had transpired on the second day of the Commons two-day debate...

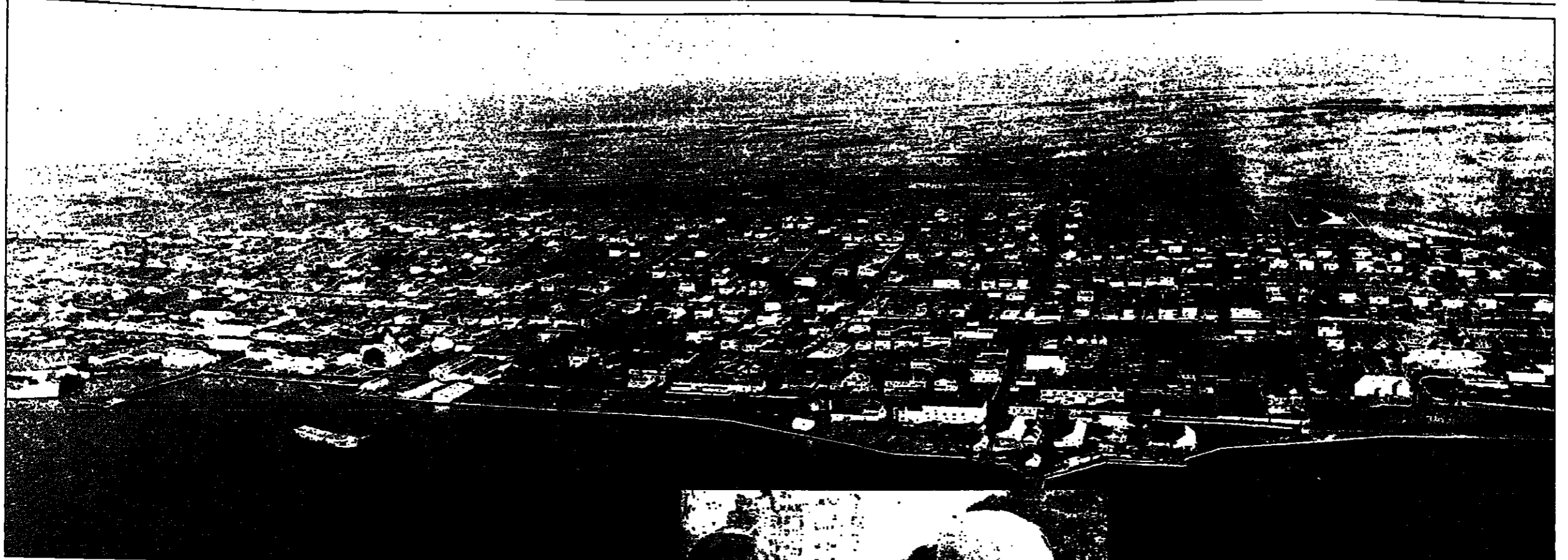
FOR YEARS now, Smallweed's life has been plagued by doubt over why John Selwyn Gummer ceased to be Selwyn. But now we have an authoritative answer. The Daily Mail's Answers to Correspondents column (a rip-off of Notes & Queries in the past) did it...

AND THEN there is David Willetts, wine and dined at the Commons, as yesterday's Guardian Daily revealed, by Bruce Anderson and Alan Watkins of the Spectator at a cost of around £170 per head...

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH's obsession with the actress Liz Hurley, portraying Willetts as a man seduced by pygmies. These Spectator chaps really know how to look after you...

PHOTOCOPIERS blamed by Heseltine — newspaper headline. A photocopier writes: I wish to protest on behalf of myself and my colleagues against this entirely uncalculated attack by a senior government minister on a loyal, hardworking and uncomplaining group of government servants...

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom of the page.



John Ezard and Graham Bound on the meeting of two brothers from the Falklands who joined opposing sides out of conviction as the conflict ended

Outcast of the bitter islands

ONE day in mid-June, 1982, two brothers walked through the smoking, stinking, war-damaged chaos of Port Stanley, capital of the Falkland Islands, towards a fateful separation. Deep in the most intense conversation of their lives, they set off from a house in Callaghan Road, where the first pioneers in 1843 built tin shanties in which poorer families still lived 139 years later.

They walked along Davis Street, past the sometimes shell-battered houses of a terminally declining colony. On the corner of Philomel Hill, named in the 19th century, after a Royal Navy ship which was in turn named after a distant English nightingale, they stopped for a long, final talk.

It was a scandal, as well as the deepest family tragedy of the 1982 conflict. "Our parents went to hell and back," said Terry. Alec was hardly ever spoken of in the house. He was the only Falkland islander who had gone over to the enemy. It was partly because he had fallen in love with an Argentine girl called Santina; but also because he was a Falklands nationalist, savagely disillusioned with British rule. After emigrating, he became convinced that Argentina had a good case for sovereignty, a rare view for an islander, which he has stuck to with Falklands doggedness.

reference to discuss differences. Politically, the brothers still differ vehemently. Alec was asked in an interview after the meeting: "Some people would call you a traitor?" "They not only would, but have," he replied. "I can only say that they are wrong."

The best that we could hope for at Christmas was a football. Alec: Graham, you speak of my childhood. It depends what you mean by childhood. Neither Terry or I had a childhood as an English child of 11 to 16 would. I began work as a peat boy when I was nine years old. I had to fill peat buckets at midday or in the evening and chop firewood to light the fire the next day. This was for two shillings (10p) a week or one and six (7½p) or something. I became a fully-paid employee the day I was 14 years old. The football Terry spoke about — I used to put him in goal and take shots from the penalty area. That really sums up our childhood.

No return: Terry (left) and Alec Betts meet 14 years after their parting in Port Stanley, above, at the end of the war (PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM GARTH)



before fishing. The census tells us most people are homeowners, own their own cars. Alec and I were two of those who were pretty close to the breadline in the Falklands of the 1980s. Nobody lives in poverty now. I am part of what is now a vibrant private sector. Alec — after listening to this account of prosperity — was asked in the interview if he regretted softening of attitudes in the 1990s that both agree that the post-1982 ban on Argentines setting foot in the Falklands should be lifted in the cause of long-term regional stability. This is an unpopular view (as yet) that is being strongly argued by a vocal minority. "If it isn't relaxed, we in the islands are in danger of puncturing our own football," Terry said.

"indifference" he and many other islanders had shown before 1982 to what was happening above their heads at governmental level between Britain and Argentina. Terry cut in: "I think Alec is speaking absolutely rubbish! What really is the issue is that Falkland islanders have been living there for 183 years. The islands are for, and I think really should be for, the islanders. I would like to see the islands and islanders have some international recognition and status — but never under the flag of Argentina." Alec said he was delighted at prosperity on the islands now. But one major problem lay in a Falklands law which bans all holders of Argentine documents from entry. "This is a little outdated," Terry wholeheartedly agreed but, he stressed, "not because of the family connection". It should be done in the interests of the whole South Atlantic.

Today's marching orders

John Pilger reports on the continuing Liverpool dock strike which makes its presence felt in a London march today

THE LIVERPOOL dockers march through London today. After 14 months, the dockers' dispute is now longer than the miners' strike of 1984-85 and one of the most tenacious in British labour history. Until recently, it was also one of the least known. But now the dockers' unfashionable struggle to reclaim almost 500 jobs may become a touchpaper for something their union and New Labour have done their best to contain.

time. Within 24 hours of their sackings, the jobs were advertised. When they tried to return to work a week later, they found the port gates locked. They have since rejected all offers of redundancy. "What matters," said Jimmy Campbell — who had 40 years on the docks and would have benefited from a pay-off — "is jobs, not just for us, but jobs for the young ones coming on."



Award-winner Graham McMillan... "No celebrations. If the dockers lose, we all go under"

her dividends to them; a village in Devon is collecting for them; an artist displaying his work in Oxford is giving them the proceeds; pensioners and schoolchildren have offered their support and time. Graham McMillan, a Merseyside port worker for 51 years, has written to the TGWU calling off a presentation ceremony next week at which he was to receive the union's silver medal. "It's not a time to celebrate," he said. "We're going back to the conditions of the late forties and early fifties. If the dockers lose, we will all go under. The union has to fight." Last week the dockers' committee presented Mr McMillan with their own award "for standing with us".

expected to culminate in a "world strike" of shipping headed for or sailing from Liverpool on January 2. Having forced the huge Atlantic Container Line to suspend its operations in Liverpool last July, the dockers now have the support of the American west coast longshoremen's union, the ILWU, several European unions and the powerful All Japan Dockers' Union. Up until now the International Transport Federation, the maritime unions' world body, has supported the dockers only "within legal bounds". But the ITF may be shedding its caution as key members privately favour an unprecedented shutdown of major world ports that would express, according to one of them, "an international labour solidarity like no other struggle in recent maritime history".

1980s and the obedience of the union bureaucracies. Certainly, the usual pejorative terms such as "extremists" can no longer be used to dismiss men and their families who are prepared to suffer hardship for a principle that now has universal application. By their action, the dockers bring into sharp focus the inequities of casual and part-time working which today impoverish not only the docks but the service industries, manufacturing, even the professions and the media.

tory. "It was 6am on a December morning in the fiercest blizzard for 70 years," said Bobby Morton, one of four Liverpool dockers who set up a picket at the port of Newark, New Jersey just as a container ship had docked from Liverpool. "We didn't know what to expect. But when we told the longshoreman coming to work what it was all about, they turned their cars around. We were dancing on the picket line, even though we hadn't been drinking."

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arts



SHOOTING STARS

RISSING:
ROALD DAHL
Up... Dahl finds fame and fortune as a writer of flamboyantly subversive children's fiction. In 1950, he dies.
Up... Last night at the Albert Hall, Dahl's take on Jack & The Beanstalk was 'semi-staged' by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, with Joanna Lumley and Danny DeVito.
And away... Next week, Dahl's Matilda, about an ESP-wielding gamine, hits the cinema screens.

FALLING:

BUZZ LIGHTYEAR
Going... Buzz, the byte-sized star of Toy Story, wins the hearts of kiddies and special-effects buffs, scoring a victory for stellar-explorers everywhere.
Going... So Buzz the toy is now top of Santa's list in households across the land. Only trouble is Buzz has sold out.
Gone... Disney announced yesterday that a 20,000-strong shipment of Buzzes is on its way, due to arrive on stardate 28.12.96. Britain's tots are doomed to wait 'till infinity and beyond' for their animated astral pal. Santa's reputation may never recover.

Art forms of the century

We used to expect a literal reflection of reality. Today, great fictions are perpetrated in its name. In the first of a new series, **Liz Jobey** reveals how photography is reinventing itself

Lie of the lens

WHAT is a photograph at the end of the century: the snapshot in your wallet, the poster at the bus stop, the picture in your paper, the image on your screen, the scan of your not-yet-born baby, the fruit 'n' nuts on your cereal packet, the model in your magazine, the print on the gallery wall? All these things and more should be the answer. But isn't it, really, all these things and less? There are too many photographs. And every one now can be broken down into digital units, transmitted down the phone line and reconstituted on a computer screen thousands of miles away. Even the Mona Lisa has been digitised, if the stories are to be believed, so that she can reappear

in all her virtual glory on a wall-screen in Bill Gates's living room. There is something spooky about his drive to own the rights to all the images in the world in his personal global library; some idea that he could recreate the universe by twiddling a few knobs and making everything look different. Photography is undergoing an identity crisis similar to the one representational painting went through at the end of the 19th century, when the advance of photography both threatened it and released it from its duties to report accurately. Photography has had a similar reaction, too: to turn in on itself, examine its component parts, and look for new forms and outlets. It may not quite have the theoretic of Cubism, but digital photography,

which has already killed off "wet" printing crafts and done away with any need for paper prints and negatives, is the photographic movement of the future. The old certainties about what a photograph is have been eroded. It used to be a simple thing: a record of a certain place, at a certain time; a memory to hold in your hand. Soon even the family snapshot will be plugged straight into telly. With a global print and broadcast media clamouring for images every day, photographs would seem to have no shortage of outlets. But the desire for stories with broad-based popular appeal is intimidating another death. News photographers and photojournalists, playing by the old rules of engagement, find their pictures unpublished.

Even front-page pictures in the quality press are given over more and more to iconic portraits, or photo-montages. Its news-value usurped by television, its emotional power dulled, photographic reporting is in decline, as readers turn to the Hollywood pile or the shopping page. And advertising — the most sophisticated area of photography today — has destroyed the last vestiges of photographic truth and produced a society of cynical visual consumers, making conceptualists of us all. No wonder the problems that undermine traditional photography — appropriation and manipulation, parody and repetition, visual tropes — are the very qualities in which post-modernism has put its faith. Ever since Andy Warhol recycled them into art, the role of photographs has been under review. Warhol chose the photos for his multiples for their symbolic, rather than narrative power: car crashes, electric chairs, movie stars were the push-button route to the big emotions: *fata, death, love*. After Warhol made advertising art, art declared open season on popular culture. Warhol's films, banal parodies which gave ordinary people their very own Hollywood moment, proved that anybody could be a superstar and vice versa. Warhol was the point at which celebrities went into the mainstream and the ordinary moved into art.

Relieved of narrative duties, photography explored its conceptual potential. One of the basic theories of conceptual art was that an art form might comment on itself. Take the American artist Cindy Sherman. She acted out run-of-the-mill B-movie female roles in her famous series of Untitled Film Stills, pointing up the parody by photographing them in the style of a 1950s black and white publicity shot. From the 1970s on — as the history of photography began to be accepted as a legitimate subject of study, as prices for prints rose — the movement Warhol started gained pace. While commercial photographers were learning new skills — how to use a video camera, how to run a website, how to convert their pictures into digital packages to sell to the new monster breed of digital libraries — photography the process, found sanctuary in the cathedrals of contemporary art.

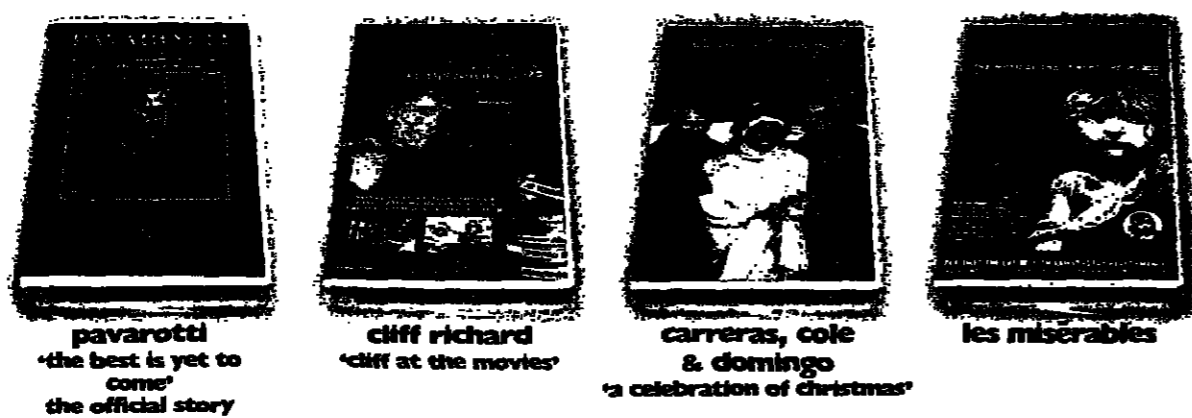
The assimilation of photography into fine art has over the past decades forced a change in the way photography is taught, looked at, sold, bought, and — irony of ironies — reproduced. One of the most telling pieces of evidence of photography's new role is the stimulation of rarely even art prices, by restricting its ability to reproduce. If you visit the Turner Prize exhibition at the Tate, among the short-listed works are Craigie Horsfield's black-and-white photographic prints. Several moose high, their surfaces have a depth and luminosity quite unlike the flatness of a normal printed picture. To the minimal captions at their side is added the paradoxical label: "Unique Photograph". This is the one and only print before the negative is destroyed. Horsfield says the prints take weeks to do, he gets filthy and covered in chemicals, he finds it physically difficult to repeat them, and rarely wants to. But in art galleries all over Europe and America, photographic prints are being limited to editions of six, or three, or only one, and prices are being raised accordingly. This represents photography's most productive bid yet for the values of painting: to be made into an irreplaceable work of art. Horsfield is adamant about not being a photographer and not having his pictures shown alongside traditional photographic work. He is not alone. The foreground of contemporary art has been settled by a new group of



artist-photographers. With the awkwardness of a genre still looking for a definition, their work is usually referred to as photo-based fine art. Their importance to the art market is reflected in the way their work is promoted by art galleries, by the absorption of photographic departments into those of fine art; by auction house selling photographs as contemporary art; and by the way the art institutions have relaxed their rules of acquisition after previously relegating photography to the status of applied art. Throughout Europe and America, large-scale photographic works are sharing the walls of art institutions with master paintings. Size is just one way they distinguish themselves from traditional photographic prints. The other — and here's the rub — is perception. These works demand the level of attention accorded to painting, partly because of size, partly because of the way they are presented within an art-gallery environment, partly because of the stated intention of the artists. They do not rely on the old photographic laws of time, or place, or familiarity. When we look at a painting, though we glance at the date and its title that is not what decides our feelings about the picture. It is possible to be entranced by Degea's *After the Bath* without worrying about who the woman is, or where, or when. We develop a relationship

with the image because it exists in its own time and conveys its particular sensuality and visual truths to us. Of course, not the least part of our admiration is wonder that the human hand and eye can produce such a thing. But if your view is that a camera is just another tool, like brush and paint, then it is something of this relationship that photo-based fine art demands. Traditional photographers however, find these perceptual distinctions hard to take. "All photography is conceptual art," said Peter Galassi, head of the Museum of Modern Art's Department of Photography. "The differences currently made between photography and so-called photo-based fine art are both intellectually and artistically untenable. Part of the reason for it is that it's useful to the market to maintain high prices for work by 'artists using photography'."

When I asked Mark Haworth-Booth, curator of photographs at the Victoria & Albert museum, what the difference was between the photography and photo-based fine art, he said quickly "About three zeroes". Galleries in Europe and America have been achieving six-figure sums — even more in the case of Cindy Sherman whose Untitled Film Stills were bought with seven other works by the Museum of Modern Art at the beginning of the year for a sum reported to be around \$1 million. In the 1980s, as prices for contemporary art soared, commercial galleries took photo-based works as a means of providing a cheaper alternative, around the \$10,000 mark. It hasn't taken long, however, for them to achieve much higher prices. As far as the artists are concerned, it's a matter of lineage: they come to photography via an art-historical route that goes through Duchamp to Warhol, through Conceptualism and Post-Modernism, rather than the photo-historical route that links Steiglitz to Cartier-Bresson and Brandt to McCullin. For them, film, video, photography and installation are all means of extending their visual language. Not surprising, then, that Douglas Gordon, this year's winner of the Turner Prize, should borrow Psycho and stretch it out to last the length of an entire day; or that Jeff Wall, one of the most highly acclaimed photo-artists, should use the values of film production and a group of actors to re-stage his own contemporary version of Hokusai's painting, *A Sudden Gust of Wind* (After Hokusai) for \$25,000, one of a number of recent acquisitions made from the small but influential group of artists, based in Europe, the US and Canada, all of whom use photography in their work. When the Tate showed its new acquisitions in Liverpool last year, most of them were



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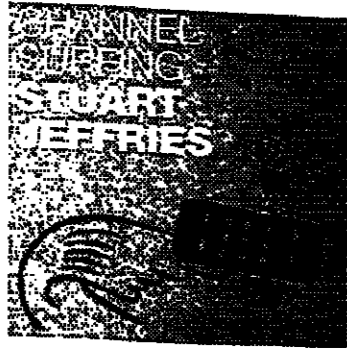
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MEGASTORES

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صديقا من الامم



Short and to the point

IF YOU were of a mind, an irredeemably disturbed mind, you could have watched more than 17 hours of *Coronation Street* this week. The orgy began on Sunday with Granada Plus's two and a quarter hour omnibus of the previous week's episodes drawn from the seventies, followed by four half hour instalments each weekday. Each day there was an episode at 8am, 12 noon, 6pm and 9pm on the channel — cunningly staggered at intervals so the true addict didn't suffer withdrawal symptoms.

This week Len took Elsie to Gatsby's. Eddie tried to obtain a cart for Stan and Hilda, and Ernest applied for a new job. "Who are these guys?" younger readers may be asking themselves. Tread softly rash youth for you step on my memories. I can still remember the early seventies upset when Fred Gee started pulling pints at the Rover's: not a week since has gone by without some other disconcerting novelty.

The orgy comes to a climax tonight with a three-hour special, *Christmas On The Street*, six festive episodes from the soap's 30-year history. In between you could have caught up with Granada's current *Coronation Street* output, four instalments on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

For serious enthusiasts, this is all just light training for the main event — *Christmas Day on Granada Plus*. Then there'll be an 8am episode, but from 10am to 6.30pm it will be uninterrupted *Coronation Street*. There will be two episodes later in the evening. You lucky people.

This is all mad, but, perversely, what's really annoying is that there isn't

quite enough of the Street on our screens. In some television regions there is no longer an omnibus of the week's *Coronation Street* from 1996. What kind of folly is this? Why do Street enthusiasts have to watch in real time or tape four separate episodes each week, while followers of *Brookside* and *EastEnders* are well served with omnibuses? It's unfair.

In this crazy world (we haven't even considered how much time you could spend watching *Brookside* and *EastEnders*, past and present each week, let alone what happens to your life if you are obsessed with two or more soap operas), what chance for *Springhill*, one of Sky's few commissioned programmes? It's only on once a week for half an hour, which makes it easy to miss, and easier still not to become addicted. True, Sky did broadcast the first five episodes in an omnibus last month to try to ensnare viewers, but, surely, brevity is the soul of its appeal.

Watching *Springhill* is also, unusually for British soaps, a rather private experience: it's more difficult to find people to discuss the show with than is the case with terrestrial soaps. But this is the future of television viewing: the days when a workplace would team with people who had seen the same thing on television last night is dwindling; common culture broadcasting with all its culturally homogenising effects is becoming less common, thank Hilda.

Springhill is intriguing because it does things most soaps would not dare. Spooky incidental music heightens the mood, or more daringly dampens it. In this week's episode, for instance, there was a fight between father and son, but wistful incidental synthesiser chords undercut the drama. This was essential since the main storyline, about revelations that the Freemans' father was a bigamist, was told in flashback — a device hardly ever used in traditional soaps — so the music supplied timely emotional distance.

Springhill started with Sue Freeman applying make up to tense pizzicato. What the music signified was not clear until the bigamy revelation was made apparent; why she was getting made up was not disclosed until the end when she turned up to be jilted at the register office by boyfriend Jamie. It was so self-consciously formal and cool as to be — singularly, among soaps — mannered. It may be unhealthy, but I feel an addiction coming on.

Lyn Gardner salutes Forced Entertainment, the creators of the first pop theatre



I fear the tick of a bomb at your hair in a fist. You ask me for a fight To blow away these blues Run me a bath, then plug me in I'm like a TV learning to swim — From *Goodnight on Baby Bird's album Ugly Beautiful (1996)*

A: How! How! Wake it up poor dead person for we are upset and grieving angels. B: Wake it up and think all hard of this. If you don't get up who will shout and sing songs at the stupid moon? A: Who will live to in then your idiot house?

B: Who will bang its walls and blood and bruise its stairs? A: Oh we are drunk and dependable angels and we can't raise our friends from out the dead. — From *Forced Entertainment's 200% And Bloody Thirsty (1988)*

Reality bites

The discovery

THEY come from the same place: Steve Jones, aka chart-topping indie singer-songwriter Baby Bird, and Forced Entertainment, the theatre ensemble who in 11 years of existence have defied all expectations of what can happen on stage.

If you want to be geographical, you can call that place Sheffield, where Forced Entertainment's writer/director Tim Etchells and a group of drama graduates settled. In those days Sheffield was a dying industrial city where you could live cheaply on the docks and even record in the local, council-run studios. Jarvis Cocker was there plugging away for 15 years before he hit the big time; Jones was there too, briefly forming the performance duo Dogs In Honey recording 400 songs on a tiny four-track recorder. It was here that Forced Entertainment began to create a body of brilliant, uneven work unparalleled in British performance history.

But Baby Bird and Forced Entertainment share a different geography, too, a place captured in the corner of your eye where the TV is always on and someone is dying on screen or having violent sex. It is a place piled high with Tesco carrier bags and where there is never Elvis Presley but lots of Elvis Presley impersonators. It is a flickering world of menacing thugs and drunken angels wearing cardboard crowns. It is a place littered with all the bits inside your head that you don't know what to do with.

Jones turns them into songs, his daffy surreal lyrics harnessed to painfully sweet melodies; Forced Entertainment take the bits and transform them into a make-believe so real it gets you where it hurts.

In the company's latest piece, the tacky and tender *Showtime*, a dying man covered in timed spaghetti is insistently interrogated while two people dressed as trees squabble behind him. It is like watching *Mastermind* where the contestant is bleeding to death, funny and unbearably sad at the same time.

In another sequence, a woman wearing a pantomime dog's head with floppy ears and liquid brown eyes meticulously plans her suicide. "Close your eyes, close your fucking eyes and keep them closed. You shouldn't be watching this."

But even if we close them, the images keep rolling on the vast TV screens inside our heads. Insistent, relentless, we live in a culture that we cannot switch off.

In the eighties we watched Forced Entertainment do one show after another and we were dazed and confused. We did not know what to make of these melancholy, poetic performances. "The whole performance is totally out of control... there is little to enjoy here and much to regret," declared the Independent of 200%. And *Bloody Thirsty*: The words came back to haunt five years later when they provided the end lines of Marina and Lee, inspired by the Lee Harvey Oswald mythology.

The more tolerant among us sat around eating frizzy salad at the ICA and bemoaned the fact that we didn't have the vocabulary to analyse the work, that we didn't speak the same language. And in retrospect, it turns out that we weren't listening very hard anyway.

Etchells knows our language inside out, the shambles on stage is precisely choreographed. You could not write the brilliant 10-minute monologue delivered by a man to whom a ticking bomb is strapped at the beginning of *Showtime* unless you were acutely aware of all the conventions of traditional theatre.

But while Forced Entertainment are arguably masters of theatre's traditional argot, it is clear that they know a completely different language too. If they had all been born five years later these cold war babies would probably have made pop videos, not theatre. But back in 1984 it was cheaper to make theatre. You didn't need any equipment. So instead they took all the language of late-night TV movies, graffiti and overheard conversations on the bus and assembled the fragments into a pacy, roller-coaster ride through urban Britain.

In doing so they have created the first pop theatre: throwaway, disposable and childlike. It is a theatre in which meaning is stumbled on almost by accident and in which identity is fractured and every carefully honed image has a personal message for the listener that you can replay through the headphones of your mind alone in your bedroom later. Like the things you see on TV, it is more real than real life.

At the ICA, London, until December 21. Main photograph by Henrietta Butler.

WAVE RIDING ANNE KARPf

Ahead by a nose

THE TROUBLE with a radio Cyrano De Bergerac is, to put it bluntly, that you can't see his hooter. In much the same way as letters, radio conceals his monstrous protuberance, so how can it persuade us of the pain caused by his appearance, or highlight the difference between how he looks and sounds?

Or so I thought, before hearing the first episode of Hilary Norrish's lively Radio 4 *Classic Serial* production of Rostand's play. In fact radio is an ideal medium for it, sparing us the fake, nested-on-absurd Pinochio proboscis that still seems to sprout on most stage and screen Cyranos. In Anthony Burgess's muscular verse translation, Alex Norton makes a swashbuckling Cyrano; his cataloguing of positive uses for a large nose was a tour-de-force, and should be pinned to the doorposts of plastic surgeons everywhere.

Lenny Henry played bovine in Anne Caulfield's stimulating play *Like Wire* (Radio 4). An uneducated chap made redundant by the army, he revisits his white childhood friend Mark (Linas Rosche), now a successful music journalist, after an absence of 12 years, only to find that Mark has fixed himself up with a phony past, replete with black stepfather, in place of the drear reality — a young single parent mother with a tendency to leave him home alone. Caulfield used the play to scrutinise the complexity of identity beyond the slogans and stereotypes, particularly the alluring black culture for those whites who act as surrogate blacks. An unusual and interesting theme, well played and handled with confidence.

Ferdinand Dennis's tour around Harlem for *Something to Write Home About* (Radio 4) challenged other black stereotypes. When Dennis put it to his American guide that the absence of white faces in Harlem betokened its symbolic apartness from the

dominant America, he was told no, blacks had fought hard to resist white gentrification of their handsome brownstones, the most valuable piece of New York today. This was a programme full of quiet observation; in an age of grab 'em presentation, its sobriety of style was attractive.

Radio 4 is currently brimming with letters from America. In his six-part *United States Of Anger*, about disillusioned Americans, Gavin Kaler, the BBC TV's punchy chief North America correspondent, often sounds as if he's tying up a four-minute TV news package, and implicitly underestimates the similar extent of British disillusion — perhaps he's been away from Britain too long. Last week, for example, he talked about the American workers' obsessive fear of being laid off, as if unaware of an equally powerful fear stalking their British counterparts.

Where but New York would you find a funniest rabbi competition? We heard two contenders — one who shouldn't give up the synagogue job — in the first programme of a new three-part series *The New York Stand-up Comedy Show* (Radio 4) tracking American humour from the 1950s punchline jokers of the Borscht Belt resort hotels via observational monologists to the present crop of improvisers. Comedy, declared Phyllis Diller, is a hostile act, for which the essential qualification is a botched childhood.

Where but New York would you find a funniest rabbi competition?

Programme one produced several amusing dysfunctional aggressors, most with fine Brooklyn accents.

Dear Diary, once the standard Radio 4 anthology of dead writers, is now an actual diary of sorts: in the age of the video diary, radio has added sound effects. Michael Schmidt's description of the consequences of the IRA bomb on his small Manchester Caravan Press was freighted with feeling, but also precise and illuminating.

A final question: can the wonderful *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* (Radio 4) continue to flourish without Willie Rushton's boisterous exuberance?

Garth Cartwright on a triumphant homecoming for the Street Preachers Manic attack

The resurrection

NO WELSH band has ever achieved anything like the success of the Manic Street Preachers, but the road that took them there has been more tortuous than they could have ever imagined when they arrived on the scene in 1990.

Back then, they wore the emblems of Arts students, their situationist slogans and existential dilemmas backed by spiky guitar riffs. As dance music swept Britain, their rock posturing and aggression made them look hopelessly dated. It took the disappearance of guitarist Richey Edwards in 1995 to relaunch them on the nation's pop consciousness. Here in Cardiff, headlining in front of a 7,000-strong audience, they celebrated their resurrection in style.

Igniting the audience with video images of the Poll Tax and miners' strike demonstrations, the Manics combined class-war slogans with locomotive-powered rock. Once more skilled in delivering sound-bites than songs, they are now the loudest, proudest survivors of Welsh soul since Tom Jones.

Vocalist James Bradfield is an uncompromising singer, handling even the most carping lyric as if it were a commandment. He delivered *Suicide Is Painless* with a tenderness he would once have avoided, and when singing old chestnuts such as *Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head*, he revealed a sentimentality one would have never guessed the Manics possessed.

With Edwards gone, the band are stripped of their androgynous focal point. Bassist Nicky Wire is all lanky cool to Bradfield's starchy fervour, while drummer Sean Moore hides behind his hair and kicks the beat along. Curiously for a band that generates intense musical heat, the Manics possess little sexual magnetism. But then, with lyrics that deal with genocide and self-hatred, perhaps this should not be surprising. Though a stubborn anger remains at the root of their music, a new vulnerability is evident. The lyrical eulogy *Enola / Alone* carried a sense of longing across the arena.

The bond between the Manics and their fans has always been strong. And here, as the band punched out the epic, jukebox pop of *A Design For Life*, Cardiff's youth pressed forward, surfing on distortion and excitement.

At a time when most of their contemporaries are busy being ironically cool, the Manics' sound and fury signified, finally, feeling. It may be naive to imagine rock music can be much more than a noisy diversion in 1996, yet in Cardiff the Manic Street Preachers' gig was a statement of community.

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Liam the Hampshire all-rounder

THE decision was Liam Boham's own and probably the right one, writes David Foot. His progress at Hampshire last summer was modest... if artificially boosted on his debut by the tradition of the family...

Cricket

Nick Varley on the end of a fairytale as the legend's son opts for the oval ball

Botham junior settles for rugby union career

THE "like father, like son" fairytale is not to be after all. Liam Boham, son of Ian, has decided to pursue a career in rugby union rather than cricket...

"Mark believes I am worth the contract and I'm determined to prove him right. I have informed Hampshire of my decision and they have wished me well..."



Liam the West Hartlepool centre

WHILE admitting he had chosen rugby partly because he no longer wished to see the words "legend's son" behind his name in newspaper reports, Liam Boham stressed that in his own judgement he has a better future as a rugby player than as a cricketer...

Tour match: Queensland v England A

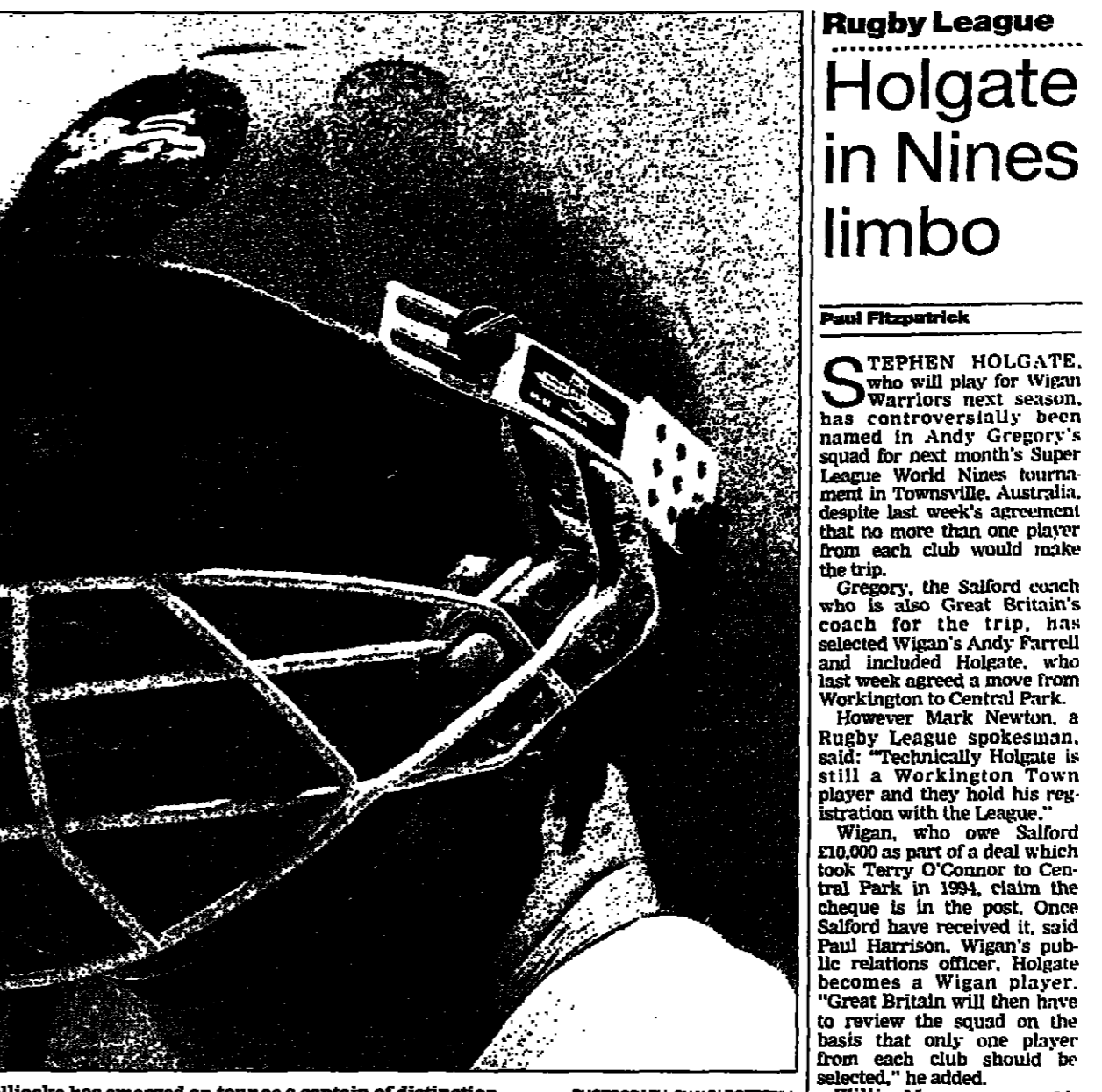
Holloake in mood for last-day antics

Andy Wilson finds a few bright sparks offsetting the boredom in Brisbane

ANDY WILSON has remembered by Ian Greig, the former Surrey captain, "as a bit of a tearaway" when he first arrived at the Oval. Now the marketing man for the Queensland Rugby League...

be playing after a trip plagued by injury while, of the other two Lancastrians, Warren Hegg has been more consistent than Glen Chappell...

Table with cricket scores for Queensland vs England A, including batting and bowling statistics for both teams.



Larrikinn to leader... Adam Holloake has emerged on tour as a captain of distinction

Cheer for England as Symonds carries the drinks at MCG

A DOUBLE lift for England emerged from yesterday's one-day matches in Australia. Australia A - significantly, minus Gloucestershire's Andy Symonds had an easy victory over the increasingly hapless West Indies...

he could still change his mind - or have it changed for him by the TCCB and his country - and play in England as an Englishman next summer...

Weekend fixtures

Table listing various football fixtures for the weekend, including Premier League, Championship, and other leagues.

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

Table listing fixtures for the Nationwide League, including Division One and Division Two.

SPORTS AWARDS

William Hill last night snatched betting on the winner of this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year award after a caller claiming to work for the BBC told them that Damon Hill had already gathered more votes than all the other contenders added together...

Results

Table listing results from various sports events, including Rugby Union, Golf, Swimming, Snooker, and Cricket.

Advertisement for the 1996-7 Season PREMIERSHIP FOOTBALL, featuring tickets available for various clubs and a phone number for bookings.

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Racing

Man and Boy, Richards has double in his sights

By Ron Cox

GORDON RICHARDS, the Greystoke trainer, holds arguably the strongest hand of chasers in the country...



Dunwoody... rides One Man



Richards... strong hand

again, but Oliver Sherwood, his trainer, has warned he will not risk him if the ground is considered too fast.

Richard Dunwoody teamed up with One Man in the scheduled King George Chase at Sandown in January...

Legless, One Man trained in a well-beaten sixth behind Imperial Call, with Rough Quest running the race of his life to finish second.

Large Action, winner of the Bula Hurdle two seasons ago, has been declared to run

at Sandown in January and the likelihood of a fast-run race today is in his favour.

Summer time and Gifford's uneasy

By Ron Cox

JOSH GIFFORD blames summer, jumping and too much moderate racing for the plethora of small fields.

Yorkshire Gale is among Gifford's better horses but he claimed fields for these events will not improve while the racing programme, which now includes summer jump racing, caters for horses of moderate ability.

Yorkshire Gale easily landed his fourth course victory, making all the run-

ning to beat his only rival, Gifford, by 10 lengths.

Cheltenham with form for the televised events

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Results

Cheltenham... 12.45 King Rat... 3.25 Eurolink... 1.40 The Duke... 3.25 Seasonal Splendour... 9.00 Set The Fashion.

Cheltenham... 12.45 King Rat... 3.25 Eurolink... 1.40 The Duke... 3.25 Seasonal Splendour... 9.00 Set The Fashion.

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Soccer

World Cup, Group Nine
Northern Ireland v Albania

Mystery men come into the Irish cold

Michael Walker in Belfast

THE MYSTERIOUS phenomenon known as the Albanian football team moves into the cold and probably half-empty stadium called Windsor Park this afternoon — an achievement in itself.

A couple of weeks ago this Northern Ireland fixture looked in doubt after Fifa vetoed the Albanian FA's participation in World Cup affairs because of "political interference" from the Albanian government.

Apparently the Albanian regime, whose elections earlier this year fell short of normal definitions of democracy, came up with the notion that because their FA had not held elections for some time, it had abused its authority.

The Albanian FA was promptly dissolved and replaced. However, once Fifa, that bastion of democracy, heard of this they came riding to the rescue of the original members who were as promptly reinstated, having given the guarantee of an election in February.

Thus today's game goes ahead although, to add intrigue, the Albanian FA's general secretary Eduard Dervishi has not made it to Belfast. Then again, neither have some of the squad. Two play-

ers from the Greek club Kalamata have been stranded outside Athens as a result of the farmers' blockade of roads while the midfielder Sokol Prenga refused to travel because he says he has not been paid for the 1-1 draw with Armenia last month.

Astrit Haxhi, the Albanian manager appointed after the 3-0 defeat by Portugal in the opening qualifier, may therefore think he needs sympathy from his opposite number.

Bryan Hamilton, though, has severe problems of his own. Six players — Keith Gillespie (Newcastle), Jim Magilton (Southampton), Nigel Worthington (Stoke), Anton Rogan (Millwall), Danny Griffin and George O'Boyle (both St Johnstone) — have withdrawn from the original squad in the past five days and there has been a spat with Hamilton's predecessor Billy Bingham over the availability of the Blackpool striker James Quinn.

Bingham, a Blackpool director, suggested that, if Quinn was a substitute today, he would have been better off playing for Blackpool against Preston last night. This has not gone down too well.

Quinn remains in Belfast. He may well feature because Northern Ireland need goals if they are to build on their inspired draw in Nuremberg last month.



Pushing his weight... Waddle, keen to make it to management one day, encourages his fellow Bantams

Group Seven: Wales v Turkey

Wales look to video reviver

BOBBOY GOULD has tried to help his Wales players forget the humiliation in Holland by playing them a video compilation illustrating how well they have played since then with their club sides.

As Wales prepared for today's Group Seven game with Turkey, Gould attempted to restore confidence with the video screening, hoping club form can be welded into an effective national team effort.

Wales, who have six points out of 12 at the halfway stage, will again top their group if they beat the Turks and the current leaders Holland draw in Belgium tonight.

But Wales have played more games than their rivals and must win their remaining four matches to reach the target Gould set before the opening game against San Marino in June.

"I said 18 points because that would make qualifying a cast-iron certainty," recalled Gould, who shrugged off the suggestion that four wins out of four may be beyond his team after the 7-1 drubbing in Eindhoven last month.

"Ask Wimbledon if it's real-

istic," said the former Dons manager, referring to his old club's unbeaten run in the Premiership.

Gould has given his team to the players but will not announce it until an hour before kick-off.

Neither would he reveal which player will have a fitness test this morning. Mark Hughes seemed the obvious candidate but the player himself declared he was ready to lead the Turks with his shin wound protected by padding.

"It's tender but, provided I don't get a whack on it, I'll be all right," said the Chelsea striker.

Hughes is poised to resume his striking partnership with Dean Saunders, who has been a useful spy for Gould having spent last season playing for Galatasaray in Turkey.

Hughes's return, along with those of Ryan Giggs and the captain Barry Horne, will give Wales a much stronger look than in Holland. Gould also makes changes at the back with Mark Bowen dropped and Alan Neilson injured. Huddersfield's Steve Jenkins may come in at right-back and the versatile Gary Speed deployed as a sweeper.



Performance of the week: Alf Inge Haaland (Nottingham Forest), who helped bring a glimmer of hope in Monday's draw with Newcastle.

A N Other

LONDON does not often produce the good technique allied to a shrewd footballing brain that this Chelsea-born midfielder embodied during the course of a long and varied career. For 10 seasons he stayed home in his country. Then he moved windows, returned to old haunts for a while, and reached for the sky before touring the old GWR routes, with a stop-over by a famous victory in between. He now runs a sugar emporium.

Last week: Bob Paisley (Bishop Auckland, Liverpool).

Ski Hotline
The Latest snow and weather reports from almost 200 resorts in Europe and North America.
By phone or fax call:
0891 002 006
SkiPost
0897 500 652
Get your ski report sent to you by first class post. Call and leave your details.
Ski Snapshot
0897 500 650
At-a-glance guide to snow conditions at almost 200 resorts worldwide. Daily table by fax.
CALLS TO 0891 MON-FRI 9.00-5.00 PM, SAT 9.00-4.00 PM AND 48p PER MIN. ALL OTHER TRAFFIC, DIALS TO 0891 & 0897. CASH CALLS TO 0891 MON-FRI 9.00-5.00 PM, SAT 9.00-4.00 PM. AGENCY: 38 WASHINGTON STREET, Q3 5AL, HULL, HU6 2SA. HULL: 0982 123 243.
The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Streetwise and fancy-free

Michael Walker meets Chris Waddle, 36 today, turning out for Bradford City and still showing flair and invention

INVENTION and flair: Kevin Keegan sat in the echoing squash court that doubles as Newcastle United's venue for press conferences and lamented that the essential ingredients which have spiced up his team in the past have been missing recently.

It was the Monday after Newcastle had lost to Arsenal and the day before Metz arrived at St James' Park. Keegan hoped for better that night, too, but invention and flair were again left on the shelf.

However, if the Newcastle manager had been tempted to look to the skies for inspiration, his eyes would have stopped at the television panny. There in the commentary box sat a genuine master of invention, Chris Waddle.

Waddle is 36 today and will turn out for Bradford City at home to Reading, and to those who think it far-fetched that he could still be playing for Newcastle there is Peter Beardsley (36 next month) and the fact that it is only nine months since Keegan last tried to sign Waddle. It never happened, though, and the player is sorry about that.

"Newcastle had a lot of injuries and suspensions at the time and I was ready to take a gamble," he says. "A player like myself would love to play for Newcastle or Man United or Liverpool, it's just the way they play football. And I think David Pleat would have let me go, but he had other pressures."

They came not least from Wednesday fans disgruntled that Waddle was on the bench. Pleat, aware of Waddle's rapport with the Hillsborough crowd, had put a £750,000 tag on his player — Celtic had offered that before Newcastle, but Waddle declined — and Pleat rejected £200,000 from Sunderland.

Yet Pleat would not give Waddle the two-year contract he wanted and, after a frustrating end to last season and the summer, Waddle was given a free transfer, but only after this season started. "I didn't see that David Pleat had any plans for me," says Waddle. "His ideal opportunity to let me go came when they won their first four league games and he obviously felt more secure. But the season had begun and most managers had their squads sorted."

So Waddle waited by the telephone but, when it rang, it was not Old Trafford or Anfield calling, it was Brockville Park — Chris Waddle was off to Falkirk. "I was a little disappointed by the lack of offers and I went to Falkirk to prove

my match fitness, not just to others but to myself. When I came back to England it did surprise me that no one came in from the Premiership."

After all it was only three seasons ago that he was Footballer of the Year.

However, he realises there may be a good reason. Waddle is ambitious, has made no secret of it, and any club manager tempted by his shuffling skills might be put off by the thought of signing a successor in waiting. In October Waddle was sitting at home near Sheffield "with Saturday approaching. I'd got fit and had a few inquiries from Chesterfield, Walsall, that sort of level — no disrespect way. I want a club as ambitious as I am, that wants to win things. I'm not just looking for a job for two years, then get the sack and have people saying, 'Well, what did he do when he was here?'"

In a career entering its 18th season and that has taken in Newcastle, Spurs, Marseille, Sheffield Wednesday, Falkirk, Bradford and 62 caps for England, Waddle has experienced many management styles: he favours a combination of Terry Venables and Arthur Cox, a sort of 'charismatic disciplinarian.'

"Terry had presence, he had this aura about him and could get players to express themselves. He could get players to believe they were better than they were."

"Arthur Cox, he bullied me for two years and I thought he was a right bastard. But I know now that he was never off my back because he wanted me to achieve something. Lots of young players think they are the finished article but they're not. I still call him 'boss'."

The secret, he thinks, is being streetwise. "Common sense streetwise. I've got that." So it is not fancy training regimes learned in Marseille? "Nah, there we just played eight-a-side with big goals for an hour every morning. Mind you, we had the players."

They certainly did: Abedi Pele, Jean-Pierre Papin, Didier Deschamps and the man the owner Bernard Tapie called "magique" — Chris Waddle. His video was a best-seller in France after he left: it was called *The French Way*. Keegan would have titled it *Invention and Flair*.

Referees biased, claims Di Canio

PATRICK GLENN

AGLAM by Celtic's Italian forward Paolo Di Canio of a Protestant conspiracy among Scotland's referees is likely to be investigated by the Scottish FA next month.

Di Canio is reported to have told the Italian sports magazine *Guerra Sportiva* in a taped interview that many Scottish match officials are "shameless" in their bias against Celtic and in their favourable handling of Rangers.

"I like everything in Scotland except the refereeing," Di Canio is alleged to have said. "Ninety per cent of the referees are Protestant and I am playing for a Catholic club. It shouldn't matter, but it does. They are shameless."

The SFA will examine his allegations and then decide whether to seek clarification from the player. Di Canio could be fined if found guilty of criticism of officials.

There is no risk of the Italian finding trouble today, as Celtic are inactive.

— then Bradford came along and said what I wanted to hear: 'Just go out and play.'"

Initially with Bradford for a month, Waddle has signed for the season and is in such form that last Saturday's performance at Maine Road was mentioned in despatches as a "masterclass". Bradford still lost, however, and face Reading with only Oldham below them in the First Division, but Waddle would have appreciated the irony had they won because Manchester City are the club with whom he came closest to achieving his ambition to be a manager.

"Yeah, I spoke to a consortium and they were keen to install me as the manager but I'm glad it didn't happen in a season because of Rangers' attempt to equal Celtic's record nine successive championships.

"There is certainly more hysteria round outside the clubs," he said.

"The onus of winning trophies is always with Old Firm players and this season is no different."

Smith restores Jorg Albertz to his squad after his recovery from a thigh injury. Aberdeen, now second, will entertain Motherwell with the same squad that beat Hearts 2-1 on Wednesday.

Athletics

Passport plan to put pressure on drug cheats

DUNCAN MACKAY
in Monte Carlo

THE latest move in the battle against drugs cheats was made here yesterday when plans for a special "passport" for athletes were revealed. It is hoped the scheme will help the sport avoid expensive legal battles.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation estimated last year that litigation over disputed drug tests cost it and its member federations at least \$24 million (£14 million). Now, with \$30m in prize money available at the IAAF's events next year, the organisation is to demand that the top 20 athletes in each event register for a programme of out-of-competition drugs testing to qualify to receive prizes.

The passport is a development of a contract introduced before last summer's Olympics which requires competitors to accept a fast-track appeals procedure and to abandon their normal legal rights. It would allow the IAAF to broaden the scope of its drugs tests.

Explaining suspicion surrounding starting improvement, Primo Nebiolo, the IAAF president, said: "If someone who is not ranked in the top 20 at the beginning of next year wins a gold medal

at our world championships in Athens, then we will congratulate them and pay them the money. But they must know that we will be testing them far more often than anyone else in the future."

Nebiolo announced that the first IAAF event to pay prize money will be the world indoor championships in Paris next March. World-record bonuses of \$50,000 will also be on offer.

Had such a system existed

Robson relief as Emerson is back for Boro

EMERSON, the wayward Brazilian "Middlesex" brought signed for £3 million from Porto, returns to the side against Liverpool at Anfield today in a move that the manager Bryan Robson hopes will end a long-running saga of trouble and strife.

The gifted midfielder flew back to Brazil again last month and threatened not to return to England this time because his wife was home-sick. There have been reports of a possible move from the chilly north-east to the sunnier climes of Barcelona but Robson has had clear-the-air talks with the unsettled couple and insisted: "Things are looking a lot better. Emerson's wife is now 100 per cent committed to giving it a go in this country."

"Hopefully the meeting has resolved a lot of problems. We have tried to handle the situation with common sense and we are prepared as a club to support Emerson. He has had problems but not been as bad as made out. There have been inaccurate reports."

"His wife seems a lot happier after the talks we have had and so does he. There have never been any problems with Emerson in training or on the pitch. We will do everything we can to help his wife feel relaxed and settled in this country."

Emerson's team-mate Fabrizio Ravanelli is to sue the Daily Mirror for suggesting he too was unhappy and wanted to leave. "I have read a number of articles which attribute comments to me which have been without any foundation whatsoever," he said. "The articles in the Mirror have caused me great embarrassment."

"I want to tell all Boro fans that I can not have hoped to settle in better on Teesside."

Sugar junior has Iversen's number

Soccer Diary

Robert Pryce

STEFFEN IVERSEN may be feeling a little tired — he hasn't had a break since Rosenborg resumed their European Cup programme in March — but the Norwegian, touch wood, appears ready to break Tottenham's recent buying trends: after Cundy, Scott, Fox, Sinton and Scalls, fans were coming to expect cast-offs.

"Whose reserve team does he play for?" asked one when told that Spurs were trying to sign Ramon Vega.

But Alan Sugar, who continues to wax bitter on the subject of overseas signings, may have a different view. Handing Iversen the No. 18 shirt was not quite the warm gesture of welcome it seemed, given that Sugar once said he would not wash his car with the garment with that number as worn by Jürgen Klinsmann.

Iversen, who said he had not known about the Klinsmann connection, may not have wanted the shirt and the comparisons it invited with its previous owner, but strangely enough he was given no choice in the matter. He just took the one that Daniel Sugar threw across to him.

BRUCE RIOCH may not have hit it off with Ian Wright, but he impressed players at Middlesbrough when he was manager there in the late Eighties, as Bernie Slaven has been telling MSS, the magazine of Middlesbrough Supporters South. "He did a great job," the striker said. "It wasn't for Bruce, I don't believe Middlesbrough would have survived."

Rioch was known as a disciplinarian even then, yet he tolerated some of the lads' more juvenile lapses. "There was one occasion," Slaven recalled, "when me and Pally jumped up on a bedroom window ledge, hid behind the curtains, and we heard the door closing... We presumed it was Dean Glover. So the two of us leapt about six feet, landed on top of who we thought was Deano, and it was actually Bruce Rioch."

A hard man, Rioch. Un-

NOT everything on Teesside is less inviting than Rio de Janeiro. Moaner's comedy club in Stockton promises in its brochure of forthcoming events: "Even Emerson's wife would enjoy this."

Coventry tied by red tape

COVENTRY'S hopes of strengthening their squad before Christmas have been dashed by red tape. The manager Gordon Strachan had hoped to complete the £800,000 signing of the Ukraine defender Alexander Jewtuschkov from Dnepr but the 26-year-old will have to wait another three or four weeks.

Coventry's secretary Gra-

ham Hoover said: "Documentation that we require from the Ukrainian FA to enable us to apply for a work permit has still to come through."

The Sheffield Wednesday striker Mark Bright has joined Millwall on a month's loan, but Bolton have failed in an attempt to secure the Wednesday midfielder John Sheridan on loan for a second month.

poor men of Great Britain's cross-country team were preparing to travel to Belgium for tomorrow's European championships. The British Athletic Federation, short of money, is sending a gold-medal rated team to Charleroi without reserves.

Since Keith Cullen, fourth last year, has been suffering from flu all week it is a risky policy, especially since the first reserve, Neil Caddy, has been in fine form.

صكرا من الامم

Rugby Union International: England v Argentina

Rowell spectre at the feast

Robert Armstrong says only a multi-try win today will satisfy the England coach

THE England coach Jack Rowell will be banking heavily on a cheerful Christmas and a non-controversial New Year in the wake of today's international against Argentina at Twickenham.

backs performing like jerky marionettes in last month's 34-19 defeat by the New Zealand Barbarians. If Rowell's squad preparations had not been seriously disrupted by club politics in the early autumn, the weight of expectation would have been much heavier by the time they met the New Zealanders, whose All Blacks had been beaten 15-9 at Twickenham in 1993.

public utterances tend to focus on the backs. If that is correct, chances are that Rowell does not work on the same wavelength as Les Cusworth and Mike Stemen, his specialist backs coaches. Rowell is not a man who readily admits to disappointment, yet one senses a mixture of surprise and baffled pride each time England fall to one of the southern hemisphere giants.

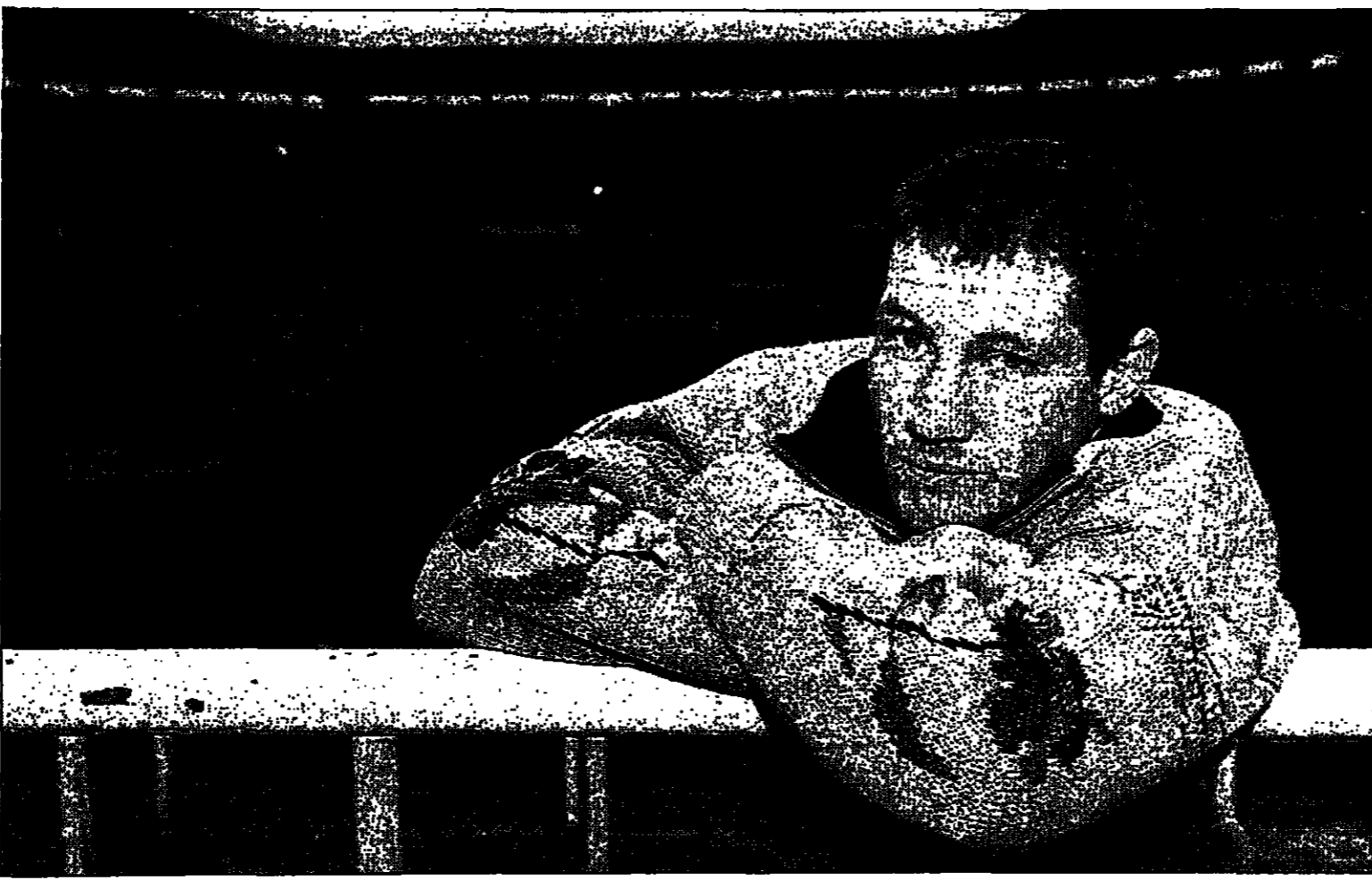


Rowell... mediocre record

Small plays the big man for the Boks

Donald McRae on the self-confessed 'nut' who wants to sell underwear and become as cultured as Eric Cantona

WITH a name like mine, says James Small with a helpless grin, "I was always destined to end up facing a guy as huge as him."



Near a record... Small at the National Stadium where he closes in on Frikk du Preez's 38 caps with a 35th Springboks appearance

Small settles back into memory, already anticipating the delicious twists to a story which defines him as one of international rugby's most resourceful players and greatest characters.

South African dumped Lomu on the Ellis Park turf in a heroic series of tackles. "When you hit him hard," Small says thoughtfully, "it doesn't feel normal. It's like hitting a wall. He's no ordinary guy. But I got his attention. Jonah's now very aware of me on the park. I'm this psycho-kid who's not gonna stop at anything."

Small prefers to reflect on the fact that "it's been pretty much an even spread of ups and downs over the last nine years. At the start of each season I think that this is gonna be a good year, a peaceful year. But then, somehow, I self-destruct."

"In New Zealand some talk show host says that you can see how badly drugs have affected me. He says you can see the madness in my eyes. And while he's talking they start showing these clips. I might be about to ruck a ball but they freeze the frame and say 'look at the frenzy in James Small'. After a while you just say to hell with it. I'm happy with my image. It sells and it forces people to give me a little space. A lot of them think 'I'm gonna turn round and deck them'."

Small, who has apparently done everything from biting his fellow Springbok Henk Le Roux on the thigh to leading his teenage following towards the depths of moral depravity, is intent on discovering a more cultural side to his complex personality.

Small looks meaningfully at me before he takes out his wallet. Eventually he finds the feature he needs. "To achieve happiness," he reads aloud, "sometimes you have to go through the worst depths of despair. Genius is about digging yourself out of the hole you have fallen - or been pushed - into. Failure makes you succeed."

International: Wales v South Africa

Wales hope lies in fatigue

David Phummer in Cardiff

SOUTH AFRICA end the smooching scheduled in their history tomorrow when they take on Wales at the National Stadium. It will be their 19th Test in 166 days and they have spent the week relaxing after a tour to Argentina and France.

amused. "Really we should never have accepted this itinerary but we agreed to play Wales because it was to be the last match at their stadium. Unfortunately that is now not the case."

and will show more variation tomorrow with the No. 8 Steve Williams used as a rover. Welsh preparations yesterday were disrupted when Allan Bateman and Gareth Llewellyn were stuck on a train outside Reading because of a derailment while the squad trained.

Former Wales prop sues Merle over head-butt

RICKY EVANS, the Wales prop put out of the game for more than four months by a head-butt from Olivier Merle in a 1995 Five Nations match in Paris, is suing the France lock for damages in the French courts.

Scotland v Italy

Hastings back to do battle as Italy seek breakthrough

SCOTLAND will be on their toes at Murrayfield today when they entertain Italy, who are keen to make a case for enlarging the Five Nations Championship.

month's 29-19 defeat by Australia. Italy can call on Andrea Castellani and Giambattista Croci, who both missed the England game through injury.

Last posting day for Xmas 25th DEC

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02/12



Casting off the big shadow
Liam Botham turns away from cricket
20



Small explosion in Cardiff
South Africa's doughty winger faces Wales
23

The Guardian Sport

Tour match: Matabeleland v England XI

Gough swings England win

David Hopps in Bulawayo

ATINGLING reminder of Darren Gough's inspirational entrance into Test cricket has left England confident that they are about to rectify a decade of under-achievement overseas.

ENGLAND XI First innings 34 (11 v Knight 114, J P Crawley 63)

MATABELELAND First innings 100 (10 v R James 62, Gough 6-64)

ENGLAND XI Second innings 230-5 (dec 15 v Thorpe 66, 16 v Atherton 50)

MATABELELAND Second innings (overweight 5-0)

G J Whittell c Gough b Gough	11
M H Decker lbw b Gough	104
M H Streak b Gough	67
W R James c Crawley b Gough	7
M D Azam b Gough	18
J A Renne not out	30
D Vagnmaria c Stewart b Gough	4
A R Whittell b Gough	18
H K Olonga b Gough	4
M Mbangwa c Crawley b Gough	4
Extras (lb, nb)	6

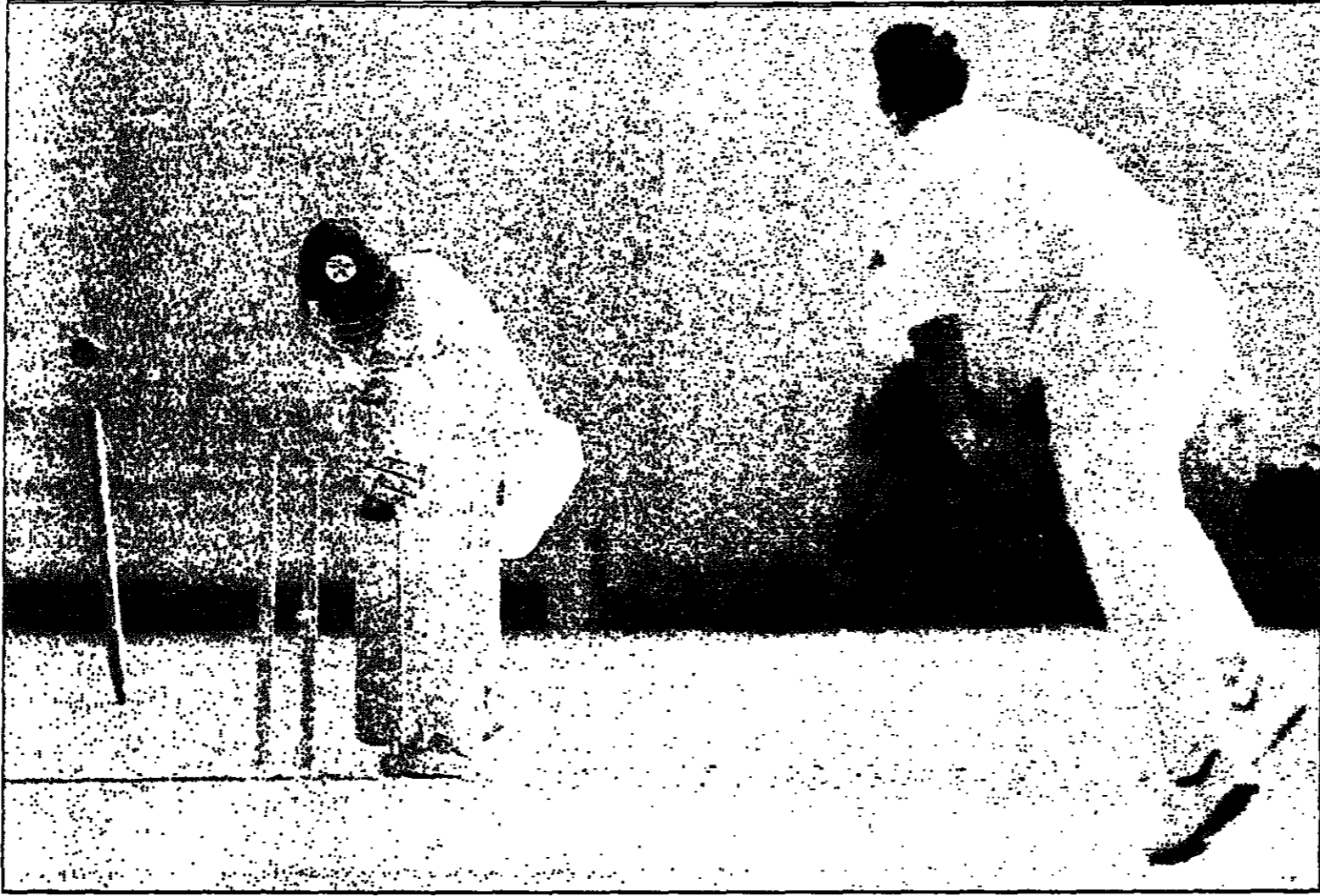
Total (52.5 overs) 381

Fall of wickets: 10, 20, 176, 195, 198, 204, 224, 241, 289

Bowling: Gough 24-6-75-5, Caddick 20-4-77, Tufnell 20-6-62-0, Irani 23-6-74, Thorpe 2-4-1-6-0, Croft 23-7-65-4

Managers: R Tiffin and C Coventry

England won by 115 runs.



Pole vault... Gough removes Olonga's off stump to move another step closer to career-best figures of 11 for 139

PHOTOGRAPH: STU FORSTER

England won by 115 runs.

combination of a flat Bulawayo pitch and several batsmen who looked uncomfortable against short-pitched bowling cleared his mind.

It was largely a case of just running in and bowling fast — a tactic which, unless England suddenly discover a haven for seam bowling, he will be given licence to adopt throughout the Test series.

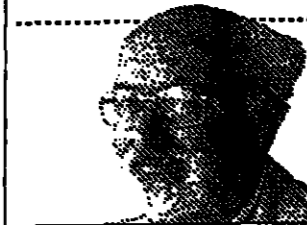
Gough's five for 75 gave match figures of 11 for 139 in 41.2 overs. He reverted to his instinctive style as a two-length bowler, driving batsmen back with short deliveries and then firing the ball into the blockhole.

David Lloyd, England's coach, said: "It was as flat as hell out there, there was nothing doing but Darren bowled aggressively, hit the players and hit the stumps. He's full of himself — I can do that, I can bowl fast, I'll do this, I'll be right — and it's good to see. People joke about bumper wars and things like that but, if they can't play the short stuff, then they are going to get some."

That Matabeleland resisted until only 11.1 overs remained was largely due to Mark Decker, a robust left-hander whose 104 held up England for nearly five hours and contributed to an unrewarding day for Tufnell.

Wicketless in 20 overs yesterday, Tufnell was always unlikely to play in tomorrow's one-day international. Russell also stands down, with Silverwood standing by as cover for Irani, who injured his back.

Scales plays by soccer's sneaky rules



David Lacey

GROIN injury and Gerry Francis permitting, John Scales will take his place in the Tottenham team against Leeds United this afternoon. It had been widely assumed that Scales would be appearing at Elland Road today but for Leeds, not Spurs.

Perhaps he realised that Tottenham was in London. Perhaps he had previously assumed it lay between Roundhay and Chapel Allerton; no matter. The thought occurs that, if Spurs feel a 30-year-old utility defender is worth paying £275,000 a year, then Dave Mackay might reasonably feel he was born 30 years too soon.

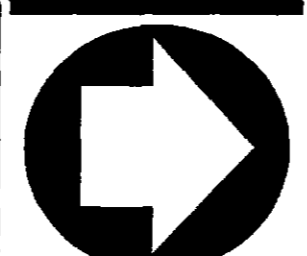
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A milder taste of happiness.

NEW

SMOKING CAUSES HEART DISEASE
Chief Medical Officers' Warning

Guardian COLLINS Crossword 20,836



The serious question in all this is whether it is right to be paid for being a sperm donor. The obvious answer is that, if Richard Littlejohn gets paid for being what he is, then why shouldn't a student? Jeremy Hardy

A copy of the Collins Collins Roget's International Thesaurus will be sent to the first five correct entries to Guardian Crossword No 20,836, P.O. Box 315, Mitcham, Surrey CR8 9AX, by first post on Friday Solution and winners in the Guardian on Monday December 23.

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- Down**
- Possibly hides a pair of sea-urchins (10)
 - Fussy, suggesting some carry-on with the foot? (8)
 - Moving ungracefully to court retreat (8)
 - Fellow that may be French (4)
 - Clairvoyant possibly hides graft (3-7)
 - 20 Show birds on another course (8,6)
 - 21 ac Overweight giant turns up in thick stockings for show with sex change (8,5)
 - Flag to show with 4's 23 down (4)
 - In heavy snow shave off the power transmitter (5,5)
 - The neglected one of the shows (10)
 - Pre-Nasser party whose destruction was swift and sad (8)
 - Small time currency has a rough time in Ireland (8)
 - See 6
 - Look at 7 21 across (6)
 - One of these in most of 3 for show, backed in clue for 12 (4)
 - Do it with shop and turkey (4)

Set by Auracaria
The seven shows are similar

Across

- They happen when 7 eats chicken — a sign (8)
- Prateria from Samoa (5)
- Film star called Alan in show (7)
- Sort of kebab, one for its leader, Pharaoh (7)
- Drug to keep blood in groove at home (5)
- Princess to fuel unfinished nose, not quite having 10? (8)
- Show mayor with sleuth at point reaching 100 mph (4,11)
- French aid could be the very devil (4-5)
- See 7
- It turns tall outside, which is beastly (7)
- 10 strong, within the bounds of belief (7)
- Swell plate in vessel (5)
- Extension under vessel for crushed flakes with fish (5,4)

Crossword Solution 20,836

The Week page 15

سكننا من الاله